

Network Working Group
Internet-Draft
Intended status: Informational
Expires: August 4, 2018

I. Young, Ed.
Independent
L. Johansson
SUNET
S. Cantor
Shibboleth Consortium
January 31, 2018

The Entity Category SAML Attribute Types
draft-young-entity-category-07

Abstract

This document describes a SAML entity attribute which can be used to assign category membership semantics to an entity, and a second attribute for use in claiming interoperability with or support for entities in such categories.

This document is a product of the Research and Education Federations (REFEDS) Working Group process.

Status of This Memo

This Internet-Draft is submitted in full conformance with the provisions of [BCP 78](#) and [BCP 79](#).

Internet-Drafts are working documents of the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF). Note that other groups may also distribute working documents as Internet-Drafts. The list of current Internet-Drafts is at <https://datatracker.ietf.org/drafts/current/>.

Internet-Drafts are draft documents valid for a maximum of six months and may be updated, replaced, or obsoleted by other documents at any time. It is inappropriate to use Internet-Drafts as reference material or to cite them other than as "work in progress."

This Internet-Draft will expire on August 4, 2018.

Copyright Notice

Copyright (c) 2018 IETF Trust and the persons identified as the document authors. All rights reserved.

This document is subject to [BCP 78](#) and the IETF Trust's Legal Provisions Relating to IETF Documents (<https://trustee.ietf.org/license-info>) in effect on the date of publication of this document. Please review these documents

Internet-Draft

Entity Category

January 2018

carefully, as they describe your rights and restrictions with respect to this document.

Table of Contents

1.	Introduction	2
1.1.	REFEDS Document Process	3
2.	Notation and Conventions	3
3.	Entity Category Attribute	4
3.1.	Syntax	4
3.2.	Semantics	4
3.3.	Entity Category Example	6
4.	Entity Category Support Attribute	6
4.1.	Syntax	6
4.2.	Semantics	7
4.3.	Entity Category Support Example	8
5.	IANA Considerations	8
6.	Security Considerations	8
7.	References	10
7.1.	Normative References	10
7.2.	Informative References	10
Appendix A.	Acknowledgements	11
Appendix B.	Change Log (to be removed by RFC Editor before publication)	11
B.1.	Since draft-young-entity-category-05	11
B.2.	Since draft-young-entity-category-04	11
B.3.	Since draft-young-entity-category-03	11
B.4.	Since draft-young-entity-category-02	11
B.5.	Since draft-young-entity-category-01	12
B.6.	Since draft-young-entity-category-00	12
B.7.	Since draft-macedir-entity-category	13
	Authors' Addresses	13

[1.](#) Introduction

This document describes a SAML attribute, referred to here as the "entity category attribute", values of which represent entity types or categories. When used with the SAML V2.0 Metadata Extension for Entity Attributes [[SAML2MetadataAttr](#)] each such entity category attribute value represents a claim that the entity thus labelled meets the requirements of, and is asserted to be a member of, the indicated category.

These category membership claims MAY be used by a relying party to provision policy for release of attributes from an identity provider, to influence user interface decisions such as those related to identity provider discovery, or for any other purpose. In general, the intended uses of any claim of membership in a given category will

depend on the details of the category's definition, and will often be included as part of that definition.

Entity category attribute values are URIs, and this document therefore does not specify a controlled vocabulary for assigning entity category values. Category URIs may be defined by any appropriate authority without any requirement for central registration. It is anticipated that other specifications may provide management and discovery mechanisms for entity category attribute values.

A second SAML attribute, referred to here as the "entity category support attribute", contains URI values which represent claims that an entity supports and/or interoperates with entities in a given category or categories. These values, defined in conjunction with specific entity category values, provide entities in a category with the means to identify peer entities that wish to interact with them in a fashion described by the category specification.

This document does not specify any values either for the entity category attribute or for the entity category support attribute.

1.1. REFEDS Document Process

The Research and Education Federations group ([\[REFEDS\]](#)) is the voice that articulates the mutual needs of research and education identity federations worldwide. It aims to represent the requirements of research and education in the ever-growing space of access and identity management.

From time to time REFEDS will wish to publish a document in the Internet RFC series. Such documents will be published as part of the RFC Independent Submission Stream [\[RFC4844\]](#); however the REFEDS working group sign-off process will have been followed for these documents, as described in the REFEDS Participant's Agreement [\[REFEDS.agreement\]](#).

This document is a product of the REFEDS Working Group process.

2. Notation and Conventions

The key words "MUST", "MUST NOT", "REQUIRED", "SHALL", "SHALL NOT", "SHOULD", "SHOULD NOT", "RECOMMENDED", "MAY", and "OPTIONAL" in this document are to be interpreted as described in [RFC 2119](#) [[BCP14](#)].

Young, et al.

Expires August 4, 2018

[Page 3]

Internet-Draft

Entity Category

January 2018

3. Entity Category Attribute

3.1. Syntax

Entity category attribute values MUST be valid URIs. It is RECOMMENDED that http:-scheme or https:-scheme URIs are used, and further RECOMMENDED that an entity category URI resolves to a human-readable document defining the category.

Authorities defining entity categories MUST produce a specification of the entity category and SHOULD make arrangement for the entity category URI to resolve to the specification in human readable form.

Authorities defining entity categories MAY use versioning of entity category URIs where appropriate, in which case each version of the specification of the entity category SHOULD clearly indicate the latest version of the entity category URI (and hence of the specification). The specification SHOULD include a description of how the authority defining the entity category implements governance for the specification in the case when the specification may be updated.

When used in SAML metadata or protocol elements, the entity category attribute MUST be encoded as a SAML 2.0 Attribute element with @NameFormat urn:oasis:names:tc:SAML:2.0:attrname-format:uri and @Name <http://macedir.org/entity-category>.

A SAML entity is associated with one or more categories by including the Attribute element described here in the entity's metadata through

use of the [[SAML2MetadataAttr](#)] metadata extension, in which the Attribute element is contained within an mdattrib:EntityAttributes element directly contained within an md:Extensions element directly contained within the entity's md:EntityDescriptor.

The meaning of the entity category attribute is undefined by this specification if it appears anywhere else within a metadata instance, or within any other XML document.

If the entity category attribute Attribute element appears more than once in the metadata for an entity, the combined set of associated attribute values SHOULD be interpreted by relying parties as if they all appeared within a single Attribute element.

[3.2.](#) Semantics

The presence of the entity category attribute within an entity's entity attributes represents a series of claims (one for each attribute value) that the entity is a member of each named category.

The precise semantics of such a claim depend on the definition of the category itself.

An entity may be claimed to be a member of more than one category. In this case, the entity is claimed to meet the requirements of each category independently unless otherwise specified by the category definitions themselves.

The definition of the concept of a category is intentionally not addressed in this document, in order to leave it as general as possible. However, to be useful, category definitions SHOULD include the following as appropriate:

- o A definition of the authorities who may validly assert membership in the category. While membership in some categories may be self-asserted informally by an entity's owner, others may need to be validated by third parties such as the entity's home federation or other registrar.
- o A set of criteria by which an entity's membership in the category can be objectively assessed.

- o A definition of the processes by which valid authorities may determine that an entity meets the category's membership criteria.
- o A description of the anticipated uses for category membership by relying parties.
- o A statement indicating the applicability or otherwise of membership of the entity category to different SAML role descriptors, and any protocol support restrictions that may be relevant.

Entity categories SHOULD NOT be used to indicate the certification status of an entity regarding its conformance to the requirements of an identity assurance framework. The [[SAML2IDAssuranceProfile](#)] extension SHOULD be used for this purpose.

If significant changes are made to a category definition, the new version of the category SHOULD be represented by a different category URI so that the old and new versions can be distinguished by a relying party. It is for this reason that authorities defining entity categories MAY employ some form of versioning for entity category URI. When versioning is used each version of the entity category MUST be treated as a separate URI.

No ordering relation is defined over entity category value URIs. Entity category attribute value URIs MUST be treated as opaque

strings for the purpose of comparison. In particular, if the specification defining the entity category relies on versioning of the entity category URI, a relying party MUST NOT assume any particular ordering between different versions of the entity category. Any order between versions MUST be spelled out in the specification.

[3.3.](#) Entity Category Example

```
<md:EntityDescriptor xmlns:md="urn:oasis:names:tc:SAML:2.0:metadata"
  entityID="https://service.example.com/entity">
  <md:Extensions>
    <mdattr:EntityAttributes
      xmlns:mdattr="urn:oasis:names:tc:SAML:metadata:attribute">
      <Attribute xmlns="urn:oasis:names:tc:SAML:2.0:assertion"
```

```
NameFormat="urn:oasis:names:tc:SAML:2.0:attrname-format:uri"
Name="http://macedir.org/entity-category">
  <AttributeValue
    >http://example.org/category/dog</AttributeValue>
  <AttributeValue>urn:oid:1.3.6.1.4.1.21829</AttributeValue>
</Attribute>
</mdattr:EntityAttributes>
</md:Extensions>
...
</md:EntityDescriptor>
```

[4.](#) Entity Category Support Attribute

[4.1.](#) Syntax

Entity category support attribute values MUST be URIs. It is RECOMMENDED that http:-scheme or https:-scheme URLs are used, and further RECOMMENDED that each such value resolves to a human-readable document defining the value's semantics. A given entity category value MAY be associated with multiple support values in order to allow for multiple forms of support, participation, or interoperation with entities in the category. The authority defining the entity category and entity category support values MUST clearly describe the relationship between (all versions of) the entity category URI and (all versions of) the entity category support URIs as applicable in the entity category specification.

The entity category support attribute MUST be encoded as a SAML 2.0 Attribute element with @NameFormat urn:oasis:names:tc:SAML:2.0:attrname-format:uri and @Name <http://macedir.org/entity-category-support>.

Claims that a SAML entity implements support for one or more categories are represented by including the Attribute element described here in the entity's metadata through use of the [[SAML2MetadataAttr](#)] metadata extension, in which the Attribute element is contained within an mdattr:EntityAttributes element directly contained within an md:Extensions element directly contained within the entity's md:EntityDescriptor.

The meaning of the entity category support attribute is undefined by this specification if it appears anywhere else within a metadata instance, or within any other XML document.

If the entity category support attribute Attribute element appears more than once in the metadata for an entity, the combined set of associated attribute values SHOULD be interpreted by relying parties as if they all appeared within a single Attribute element.

[4.2.](#) Semantics

The presence of the entity category support attribute within an entity's entity attributes represents a series of claims (one for each attribute value) that the entity supports peer entities in a category in a particular fashion. The precise semantics of such a claim depend on the definition of the category support identifier itself. Category support claims will often be defined to be self-asserted.

An entity may be claimed to support more than one category. In this case, the entity is claimed to meet the support requirements of each category independently unless otherwise specified by the category definitions themselves.

The definition of the concept of "support" for a category is intentionally not addressed in this document, in order to leave it as general as possible. It is assumed that entity category definitions MAY define one or more support values signifying particular definitions for "support" by peers as motivated by use cases arising from the definition of the category itself.

A common case is expected to be the definition of a single support value whose URI is identical to that defined for the category itself.

If significant changes are made to a category support definition, the new version SHOULD be represented by a different category support URI so that the old and new versions can be distinguished by a relying party. It is for this reason that authorities defining entity categories support MAY employ some form of versioning. When

MUST be treated as a separate URI.

No ordering relation is defined over entity category URIs. Entity category attribute support value URIs MUST be treated as opaque strings for the purpose of comparison. In particular, if the specification defining the entity category support values relies on versioning, a relying party MUST NOT assume any particular ordering between different versions of the entity category support URI. Any order between versions MUST be spelled out in the specification.

[4.3.](#) Entity Category Support Example

```
<md:EntityDescriptor xmlns:md="urn:oasis:names:tc:SAML:2.0:metadata"
  entityID="https://idp.example.edu/entity">
  <md:Extensions>
    <mdattr:EntityAttributes
      xmlns:mdattr="urn:oasis:names:tc:SAML:metadata:attribute">
      <Attribute xmlns="urn:oasis:names:tc:SAML:2.0:assertion"
        NameFormat="urn:oasis:names:tc:SAML:2.0:attrname-format:uri"
        Name="http://macedir.org/entity-category-support">
        <AttributeValue>
          >http://example.org/category/dog/basic</AttributeValue>
        <AttributeValue>
          >http://example.org/category/dog/advanced</AttributeValue>
        <AttributeValue>urn:oid:1.3.6.1.4.1.21829</AttributeValue>
      </Attribute>
    </mdattr:EntityAttributes>
  </md:Extensions>
  ...
</md:EntityDescriptor>
```

[5.](#) IANA Considerations

This memo includes no request to IANA.

[6.](#) Security Considerations

The presence of the entity category attribute within an entity's entity attributes represents a series of claims (one for each attribute value) that the entity is a member of the named categories. Before accepting and acting on such claims, any relying party needs to establish, at a level of assurance sufficient for the intended use, a chain of trust concluding that the claim is justified.

Some of the elements in such a chain of trust might include:

- o The integrity of the metadata delivered to the relying party, as for example assured by a digital signature.
- o If the entity category attribute is carried within a signed assertion, the assertion itself must be evaluated.
- o The policies and procedures of the immediate source of the metadata; in particular, any procedures the immediate source has with regard to aggregation of metadata from other sources.
- o The policies and procedures implemented by agents along the publication path from the original metadata registrar: this may be determined either by examination of the published procedures of each agent in turn, or may be simplified if the entity metadata includes publication path metadata in `mdrpi:PublicationPath` elements as described in [[SAML2MetadataRPI](#)] [section 2.3.1](#).
- o The policies and procedures implemented by the original metadata registrar. The registrar's identity may be known implicitly, or may be determined from the entity metadata if it includes an `mdrpi:RegistrationInfo` element and corresponding `@registrationAuthority` attribute as described in [[SAML2MetadataRPI](#)] [section 2.1.1](#).
- o The definition of the category itself; in particular, any statements it makes about whether membership of the category may be self-asserted, or may only be asserted by particular authorities.

Although entity category support attribute values will often be defined as self-asserted claims by the containing entity, the provenance of the metadata remains relevant to a relying party's decision to accept a claim of support as legitimate, and the specific definition of a support claim will influence the assurance required to act on it.

The conclusion that a claim of category membership or support is justified and should be acted upon may require a determination of the origin of the claim. This may not be necessary if the immediate source of the metadata is trusted to such an extent that the trust calculation is essentially delegated to it.

In many cases, a claim will be included in an entity's metadata by the original metadata registrar on behalf of the entity's owner, and the `mdrpi:RegistrationInfo` element's `@registrationAuthority` attribute is available to carry the registrar's identity. However, any agent

that is part of the chain of custody between the original registrar and the final relying party may have added, removed or transformed

claims according to local policy. For example, an agent charged with redistributing metadata may remove claims it regards as untrustworthy, or add others which were not already present if they have value to its intended audience.

7. References

7.1. Normative References

[BCP14] Bradner, S., "Key words for use in RFCs to Indicate Requirement Levels", [BCP 14](#), [RFC 2119](#), March 1997.

[SAML2MetadataAttr]
Cantor, S., Ed., "SAML V2.0 Metadata Extension for Entity Attributes", August 2009,
<<http://wiki.oasis-open.org/security/SAML2MetadataAttr>>.

[SAML2MetadataRPI]
La Joie, C., Ed., "SAML V2.0 Metadata Extensions for Registration and Publication Information Version 1.0", April 2012,
<<http://wiki.oasis-open.org/security/SAML2MetadataDRI>>.

7.2. Informative References

[REFEDS] Research and Education Federations, "REFEDS Home Page", <<http://www.refeds.org/>>.

[REFEDS.agreement]
Research and Education Federations, "REFEDS Participant's Agreement", <<https://refeds.org/about/refeds-participants-agreement>>.

[RFC4844] Daigle, L. and Internet Architecture Board, "The RFC Series and RFC Editor", [RFC 4844](#), July 2007.

[SAML2IDAssuranceProfile]
Morgan, RL., Ed., Madsen, P., Ed., and S. Cantor, Ed., "SAML V2.0 Identity Assurance Profiles Version 1.0",

[Appendix A](#). Acknowledgements

This work has been a collaborative effort within the REFEDS and MACE-Dir communities. Special thanks to (in no particular order):

- o RL 'Bob' Morgan
- o Ken Klingenstein
- o Keith Hazelton
- o Steven Olshansky
- o Mikael Linden
- o Nicole Harris
- o Tom Scavo

[Appendix B](#). Change Log (to be removed by RFC Editor before publication)

[B.1](#). Since [draft-young-entity-category-05](#)

Recommendation on versioning and language on requirements for entity category specification.

[B.2](#). Since [draft-young-entity-category-04](#)

No substantive changes.

[B.3](#). Since [draft-young-entity-category-03](#)

Additional improvements in response to IETF Gen-Art review:

- o [Section 3.2](#): additional SHOULD language recommending that category definitions include applicability information for particular SAML role descriptors.
- o [Section 3.2](#): added an informative reference to [[SAML2IDAssuranceProfile](#)] and language recommending its use over entity categories where appropriate.

B.4. Since [draft-young-entity-category-02](#)

Fix link to the REFEDS Participant's Agreement [[REFEDS.agreement](#)].

Clarifications in response to IETF Gen-Art review:

Young, et al.

Expires August 4, 2018

[Page 11]

Internet-Draft

Entity Category

January 2018

- o [Section 1](#): make explicit the fact that we don't specify any values of either attribute in this document.
- o [Section 3.1](#), [Section 4.1](#): clarify that it is possible for attribute values to appear within multiple Attribute elements, and that this SHOULD be regarded as equivalent to combining them within a single Attribute element.
- o [Section 3.2](#), [Section 4.2](#): clarify the expectation that categories are independent unless their definitions say otherwise.
- o [Section 3.2](#), [Section 4.2](#): If significant changes are made to a category definition, the new version of the category SHOULD be represented by a different category URI *so that the old and new versions can be distinguished by a relying party*.
- o [Section 3.2](#), [Section 4.2](#): *No ordering relation is defined over entity category value URIs.* Entity category attribute value URIs MUST be treated as opaque strings *for the purpose of comparison*.

B.5. Since [draft-young-entity-category-01](#)

Changes from REFEDS consultation process:

1. Simplify title from "The Entity Category SAML Entity Metadata

Attribute Types" to "The Entity Category SAML Attribute Types".

2. Clarify the use of [[SAML2MetadataRPI](#)] in [Section 6](#) by indicating the elements and attributes to be used, and the sections of [[SAML2MetadataRPI](#)] in which they are defined.
3. Remove any implication that category and category support claims are necessarily being made "by" the entity itself.
4. Clarify that the origin of a category membership or support claim may not always be the original registrar.

Grammar fix in Abstract.

Change the reference anchor for the SAML [[SAML2MetadataRPI](#)] extension, as it now more commonly known as RPI than its original DRI abbreviation.

[B.6.](#) Since [draft-young-entity-category-00](#)

Update affiliations for Leif Johansson and Scott Cantor.

Remove authors from acknowledgements.

Young, et al.

Expires August 4, 2018

[Page 12]

Internet-Draft

Entity Category

January 2018

Reorganize some of the introductory boilerplate sections.

[B.7.](#) Since [draft-macedir-entity-category](#)

Adopted as base for [draft-young-entity-category-00](#).

Changed ipr from "pre5378Trust200902" to "trust200902" and submission type from IETF to independent.

Designate Ian Young as editor for this version. Set more general affiliation.

Modernised reference to [RFC 2119](#) [[BCP14](#)] and moved that reference to the introduction.

Adjusted layout of examples so that they don't exceed the RFC standard line length.

Minor typographical nits but (intentionally) no substantive content changes.

Authors' Addresses

Ian A. Young (editor)
Independent

E-Mail: ian@iay.org.uk

Leif Johansson
SUNET

E-Mail: leifj@sUNET.se

Scott Cantor
Shibboleth Consortium

E-Mail: cantor.2@osu.edu