

Policy assertion classes

Overview

This document makes an attempt at defining the actions that a provider with a policy and the requester of that policy need to take. This is an extremely simplified model and in reality there may be many more entities that need to be aware of policies. Moreover, the provider and requester may not clearly map to the physical entities that publish, retrieve, enforce and apply policies.

The purpose of this document is to further the understanding of various proposals that have been brought to the WS-Policy working group and work out the commonalities between these proposals.

Assertion classes

Discussions in open and currently closed issues such as #3564, #3789, #3721 and #3602 have evidenced an underlying premise regarding the class of policy assertions defined. For example, the class for the `<oasis:Replicatable>` assertion mentioned in issue 3789 may be considered „advisory“. The „local“ attribute in issue 3721 is supposed to be applied to entire policies rather than single assertions but the semantics would be the same if applied to assertions. In at least one domain, „obligations“ are widely used, such as XACML. Although the XACML model is much more refined, the overall semantics of obligations should become clear.

The following table provides a simplified list of assertion classes.

Assertion class	Provider	Requester
Advisory	Implement behavior mandated by assertion	Apply assertion if capable of utilizing it, ignore otherwise
Local	Implement behavior mandated by assertion ¹ , may publish assertion	Ignore assertion
Obligation	Publish assertion	Implement behavior mandated by assertion
Optional	Support behavior mandated by assertion	Choose whether to apply assertion
Proprietary	Proprietary provider: Implement behavior mandated by assertion Other providers: Reject policy	Proprietary requester: apply assertion Other requesters: ignore assertion
Required	Implement behavior mandated by assertion	Apply assertion

¹ This class of assertions can only express a requirement for the policy provider but not the policy requester