
KNOWLEDGE BASE ARTICLE

WAYFLESS URL's

WAYFless URLs simplify access to resources protected by SAML-based systems by bypassing the Discovery Service step, enhancing user experience. This is particularly useful in educational settings where frequent access to online resources is needed.

PUBLISHED

17 Aug 2023

DOCUMENT

InfoHub — Knowledge, news, and updates from EssingtonITS

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Using resources protected by SAML-based systems like Shibboleth often presents a challenge for end users, particularly when they encounter the login process for the first time in each browser session. This can lead to confusion and frustration, as users must navigate the Discovery Service to select their institution before accessing the desired resource. To streamline this process, organisations can employ a technique known as creating a WAYFless URL. This approach allows institutions to generate direct links, such as those used in an LMS course, that enable users to access services or resources via federated access management without needing to manually select their institution each time.

WAYFless URLs significantly enhance the user experience by reducing the number of steps required to gain access. For instance, when a student clicks on a WAYFless URL, they are seamlessly directed to the resource, bypassing the usual Discovery Service step. This is particularly beneficial in educational settings where students and staff frequently access a variety of online resources.

The late Rhys Smith from JISC developed a tool known as the WAYFless URL Generator. This tool allows staff to input the target Service Provider (SP) and link it to their institution's Identity Provider (IdP). By doing so, the tool generates a URL that simplifies the login process for users from that institution. Some Service Providers, like [Box of Broadcasts](#), offer this functionality specifically for their services, ensuring that users can access content with minimal hassle.

For those dealing with UK federated resources, JISC provides a comprehensive [list of Service Providers that support WAYFless URLs](#). This list is a valuable resource for institutions looking to implement WAYFless URLs across various services. Any inquiries regarding these options can be directed to Mark Williams at JISC via [email](#).