# Home

The Shibboleth software is a web-based single sign-on system made up of three components:

- The Identity Provider (IdP) is responsible for user authentication and providing user information to the Service Provider (SP). It is located at the home organization, which is the organization which maintains the user's account.
- The Service Provider (SP) is responsible for protecting an online resource and consuming information from the Identity Provider (IdP). It is located at the resource organization.
- The Discovery Service (DS) helps the Service Provider (SP) discover the user's Identity Provider (IdP). It may be located anywhere on the web and is not required in all cases.

Component Interactions

Basic Interaction

The following diagram shows the interaction between the user, located at their web browser, the IdP, located at the home organization, and the SP, located at the resource organization.
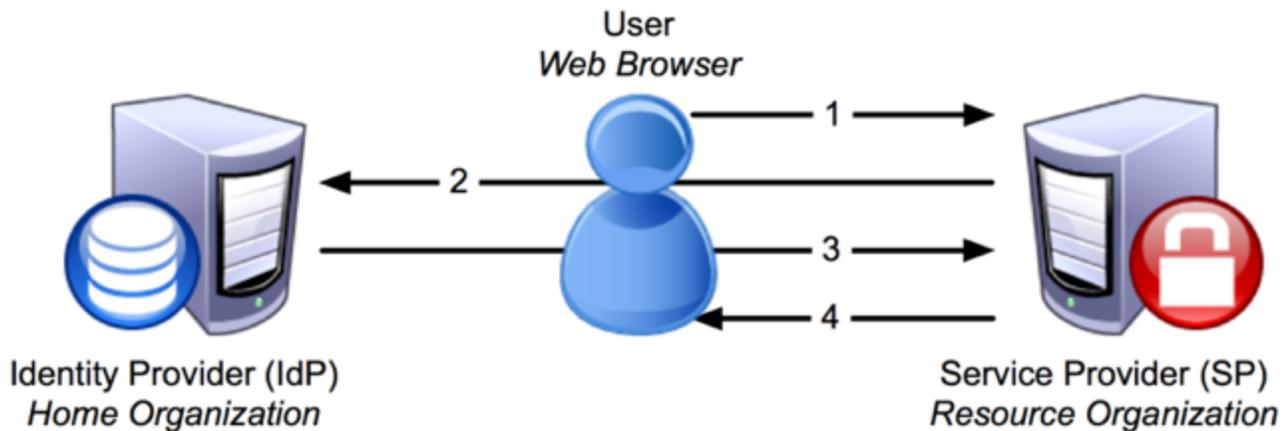
1. The SP detects the user attempting to access restricted content within the resource.
2. The SP generates an authentication request, then sends the request, and the user, to the user's IdP.
3. The IdP authenticates the user, then sends the authentication response, and the user, back to the SP.
4. The SP verifies the IdP's response and sends the request through to the resource which returns the originally requested content.

Further Details

Given this very basic familiarity with the Shibboleth components and their interactions, the following documentation provides further detail. The section *Understanding the Basics* provides further information about the concepts and components within Shibboleth. The *Identity Provider* and *Service Provider* sections give further details relating specifically to their respective components.

Understanding the Basics

Goals & Requirements	Describes the goals of the Shibboleth software and the environments in which it operates.
System Flow	Describes the general flow through the system.
Metadata	Describes what metadata is and how it is used by Shibboleth.
Sessions	Discusses what a user session is and a Shibboleth session differs from normal web application sessions.
Name Identifiers	Describes what Name Identifiers are and how they are used.
Glossary	A glossary of terms used throughout this wiki.

More Concepts

Entity Naming	Naming guidelines for systems
Attribute Naming	Naming guidelines for attributes
Trust & Credentials	Describes how one Shibboleth component identifiers itself to, and trusts, another.
IdP Discovery	Describes how a service provider determines a user's identity provider.

Advanced Uses	Discussion of more advanced use cases.
Protocols & Profiles	Describes the different request/response types that Shibboleth supports.

Identity Provider

Relying Parties	Describes how the IdP identifies and interacts with relying parties.
Sessions	Describes how the IdP establishes and maintains sessions.
Metadata	Describes how the IdP uses metadata.
Attribute Storage	Discussion of attribute storage and access.
Requisite Skills	Describes the skill set an IdP deployer should have.

Service Provider

Sessions	Describes how the SP establishes and maintains sessions.
Metadata	Describes how the SP uses metadata.
Attribute-based Access Control	Discusses how information form the IdP can be used to control access to a resource.
Requisite Skills	Describes the skill set an SP deployer should have.