

Request for Authority to Create a Centralized Login Platform

Date: April 14, 2023

To: General Governance Committee

From: Chief Information Security Officer

Wards: All

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to request Council authority to authorize the Chief Information Security Officer to create a centralized login platform for public-facing City websites, applications, and digital services ("City Online Services").

The proposed centralized login platform will create a single point of entry for members of the public to access City Online Services, and will eliminate the need to leverage multiple login platforms for City Online Service. The proposed centralized login platform will enhance the cybersecurity and protection of login mechanisms, deliver services more efficiently, and also greatly improve the customer experience.

The City will collect the personal information required to create a centralized login platform, establish a digital profile for each user, and allow members of the public to direct the personal information to the specific City Online Services they choose to use.

While the proposed centralized login platform will result in personal information being collected in a different manner, it is not proposed that any additional information will be collected from what is being collected today by the City Online Services.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Chief Information Security Officer recommends that:

City Council authorize the Chief Information Security Officer (CISO) to create a centralized login platform for City websites, applications, and digital services, including the collection of necessary personal information; the creation of individual user digital profiles; and the directing of the necessary personal information to the proper operation of City websites, applications, and digital services associated with municipal services provided by the City as authorized by users of the City websites, applications and digital services.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no financial impact for this initiative.

DECISION HISTORY

No decision history.

COMMENTS

The City of Toronto manages a large, complex IT environment hosting many websites, applications, and digital services ("City Online Services") which are regularly accessed by members of the public. The City Online Services currently provide the public with the ability to access various City Online Services (e.g. eBilling, MyToronto Pay, and My Child Care Account) using the internet. Currently, members of the public must log in to each of the City Online Services independently. Since each of the various City Online Services were developed independently, at various times, the City is currently using independent authentication methods for each.

As a result, each of the City Online Services has its own practice for managing the user login process and associated personal information. Many of these processes are manual, resulting in burdensome login procedures and slow password reset/username recovery functionality. Managing access on an app-by-app basis can also lead to human error and opens the door to vulnerabilities. The impact of having to manage multiple user login processes for each of the City Online Services, rather than a single standardized City-wide user login process for the City Online Services, results in reduced efficiencies, creates potential cybersecurity and privacy risk and a more fragmented customer experience.

Proposed Centralized Login Platform

The proposed centralized login platform will consist of an online application that collects basic personal information to establish a digital profile for each user. The creation of the centralized login platform will result in a change to the manner in which personal information is being collected. However, it will not collect any information that is not being collected today by the City Online Services. It will only collect information currently used by the City Online Services which is necessary for the existing lawfully authorized purposes to which the specific City Online Services relate.

Potential Benefits of Proposed Centralized Login Platform

The objective of the centralized login platform is to replace the inconsistent user login processes for City Online Services with a single standardized City-wide user login process for the City Online Services. It is predicted that this change in the City's approach will have numerous benefits for the City and members of the public.

Industry best practice specifies that creating a centralized login platform minimizes cybersecurity risk by:

- Enhancing protection for the login process across all websites, applications, and digital services, through promoting the use of Multi-Factor Authentication;
- Reducing manual processes and eliminating user error during account creation and management;
- Reducing risks associated with social engineering and other forms of cyber-attacks;
- Standardizing login mechanisms across multiple systems, which will streamline security updates, security patches, and support from vendors; and
- Centralizing the City's access monitoring capabilities and facilitating rapid responses to suspicious account activity.

A centralized login platform will improve the customer experience in a number of ways:

- Simplified login process across City Online Services where each customer interaction will be smooth, convenient, and hassle-free;
- Seamless digital customer experience;
- More efficient password reset and username recovery process;
- Single username and password to remember for all City of Toronto websites, applications and digital services, meaning fewer resets;
- A fully digitally accessible (AODA compliant) user interface optimized for both desktop and mobile view; and
- Ease of self-registration, resulting in a shorter time for user enrollment and access to digitized City Online Services requiring user login.
- Simplifies access for residents and businesses through consistency, single login and credentials, reciprocity, and trust among programs and enables greater personalization based on services people use.

From a financial and resourcing perspective, independent login mechanisms across websites, applications, and digital services are operationally expensive to maintain. With the creation of a centralized login platform, the following operational efficiencies can be realized:

- Reduction in data required for initial customer registration;
- Fewer "exits and disconnects" during the customer registration process;
- Expected reduction in traffic and inquiries for 311 customer service representatives, due to enhanced self-service options;
- Expected reduction in requests for user login assistance directed to other City staff;
- Improved efficiency in the management of login mechanisms;
- Improved self-serve options concerning login mechanisms; and,
- Standardized approach to onboarding new solutions reduces effort for onboarding new online services.

CONTACT

John Elvidge, City Clerk, City Clerk's Office,
416-392-8641, John.Elvidge@toronto.ca

Wendy Walberg, City Solicitor, Legal Services,
416-392-8078, Wendy.Walberg@toronto.ca

Renee Laforet, Interim Chief Technology Officer, Technology Services Division,
416-397-0500, Renee.Laforet@toronto.ca

Gary Yorke, Executive Director, Customer Experience (311),
416-338-7789, Gary.A.Yorke@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

Maneesh Agnihotri
Interim Chief Information Security Officer

ATTACHMENTS
