

User Authentication Research

Considered Packages:

- Devise (<https://github.com/plataformatec/devise>)
- OmniAuth (<https://github.com/intridea/omniauth>)
- Authlogic (<https://github.com/binarylogic/authlogic>)

Consideration Criteria:

Package	Does it work w/ Rails 4? (Y/N)	How easy it is to implement (1-10)	How easy it is to create users with different rights (1-10)	Availability of support documentation (1-10)
Devise	Y	6	9(seems easy)	10
OmniAuth	Y	8	5(unsure)	5
Authlogic	Y	9	7	9

Sample App Description:

After searching for authentication packages, we decided to create sample apps for Devise and Authlogic because they seemed to be the two most widely used methods for authentication in Rails and they both had a decent amount of online documentation.

For testing Devise, we made a simple app that would allow a user to login, and make sure that they were authenticated, to a home page. We also created Admin authentication and had this login be to a separate page and display content different than the standard user's on the home page. Getting the initial setup for Devise to work took a little bit of time although once we were able to get it working it was very straightforward (there weren't any major hiccups during the install). To display content specific to users, all that was needed in the view was a simple statement <% if user_signed_in? -%>. This was also the case to display content specific to an admin, <% if admin_signed_in? -%>. Also, authenticating users and retrieving specific data about the current user was relatively easy. Overall the package seemed fairly easy to work with and was easy and intuitive to use after learning the general syntax and method calls needed.

We made a very similar app to test the capabilities of Authlogic, although we didn't implement an Admin user for this app. Overall, this package was pretty straightforward to install with hardly any problems at all. Displaying content specific to users that were logged in was just as easy as with Devise, all that was needed was a simple if statement. Authlogic did require you to create more code

yourself (there is a `user_sessions` controller that we defined, although this does give you a better understanding of what the code is actually doing). All of the user creation and authentication was simple in Authlogic as well (Rails in general seems to do a very good job at simplifying stuff).

Selection & Summary:

Both of these packages seemed to work very well when creating an app and were pretty much equally as effective at implementing authentication, but after discussing and weighing our options, we decided to go with Authlogic. Both Authlogic and Devise seemed like a good choice (and Devise may have won if we were starting an app from scratch since having admin privileges seemed easy to do) but Authlogic seemed to be easier to implement and we believe it will be easier to incorporate into an already existing project.