OSC Case Study – Blue Cross/Blue Shield Rhode Island Application SSO (IdP and SP services)

All enterprises, struggle with user access, partner and customer access – but healthcare seems unique in the challenge of client diversity, devices and locality.   In healthcare, there is need for ubiquitous access and paramount security.   The risk of security breaches is not only federally regulated (under HIPAA/HITECH) but also a legitimate concern of the conscientious personnel who staff these organizations.

SSO access from internal and external IT consumers was the challenge that Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Rhode Island (https://www.bcbsri.com) faced. BCBSRI required secure SSO for not only inbound members, but for outbound users as well.   All devices had to be supported, for both BYOD (bring your own devices) and enterprise devices.

To meet the challenge, BCBSRI needed to build an enterprise SSO system that could scale for users and still be manageable by their IT staff.   Technically, they knew how to build out a SSO Identity Provider (IdP) for outbound traffic but did not know how to build an SSO Service Provider (SP) component for inbound users.

The application to be supported is the Blue Cross Association EPA (Electronic Provider Access System) .   The users had to be stored and accessed across the whole BCBS association and to support inbound and outbound SSO.   To meet these requirements, BCBSRI reached out to the known identity, access application specialist, OSC Technologies, LLC.

OSC surveyed the environment and decided that what was best was to build a customer SAML-supporting IdP/SP system based on a java code base that they had utilized and perfected in similar deployments.   SAML was chosen for the SSO standard for its industry acceptance and cryptographically secure system of identity transference and establishment.   From first discussion to implementation, the work was done in only a few months period.

"The work was done to spec and OSC was professional in all the interactions – both technically and personally", sited Bob DeFelice, Web Development Manager at BCBSRI. *"The site has improved users experience and increased productivity for staff – by eliminating additional sign-ons and passwords".*

OSC Technologies focuses on SSO projects like BCBS-RI, where its strengths in application and security deployment provide IT differentiators.