Title:
How does LDAP work

Word Count:
306

Summary:
Lightweight Directory Access Protocol or LDAP is a TCP/IP-based Internet
protocol used by email programs and a few other applications to search and fetch
information from a directory stored on a server. A directory is a data
repository storing identical chunks of information in a hierarchical and logical
sequence.

Keywords:
ldap

Article Body:
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repository storing identical chunks of information in a hierarchical and logical
sequence.

For instance, a telephone directory that has various subscriber names indexed
alphabetically with associated telephone numbers and addresses is an example of
a directory. This kind of a structure can easily be implemented using LDAP.
However, this protocol is not limited to accessing just contact information
about people. It can locate shared resources on a network like printers and
scanners, and allow people to use the resources and other shared services using
a single password.

LDAP can be successfully implemented where identical forms of sequentially
stored information need to be accessed quickly and where updates are done very
rarely. Email clients frequently use LDAP to access directory information from a
server. Since LDAP does not support encryption, processes like updating and
modifying information on the server from the client needs to be done using a
secure SSL connection.

LDAP can also use DNS or Domain Name System to structure the top-level of its
hierarchy. This enables the system to have a wide scope at the top end of the
hierarchy, but at the same time funnel down to a single specific entity at the

lower end of the hierarchy. For instance, the top level may represent countries, states or other large geographical boundaries, whereas the bottom end might point to a single document on a computer, a shared resource on a network or a particular individual's information. This makes the protocol very versatile in dealing with a large variety of applications.

The University of Michigan developed the LDAP protocol and its current version is LDAPv3.