INCIDENT REPORT
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

Incident Report – February 23, 2017
Incident #2017-187
SSO Attribute Release Failure – Login to some sites affected

Summary

Between approximately 7:25am - 8:00am on the morning of Thursday, February 23, 2017, Queen's Single Sign-On (SSO), the feature that allows for a single login across multiple Queen's websites and services, experienced an issue that limited or denied access to some of these sites and services. Depending on the site or service a user was attempting to access, they could have experienced:

- A successful login with all functionality

- A successful login with limited or broken site functionality, or;

- An unsuccessful login where they were not able to access that specific site or service

This was caused by a configuration issue with the Single Sign-On (SSO) service (https://login.queensu.ca) used by OnQ, PeopleSoft, Moodle, the MyQueensU portal and other Queen's sites.

During the affected period, required information was not transferred between SSO and the applications, which ultimately caused the login to fail.

Impact

All sites and/or services that use Queen's production Single Sign-On service were affected (i.e. OnQ, PeopleSoft, Moodle, MyQueensU portal, etc.). The duration of the incident was approximately 35 minutes.

Root Cause

An update to the SSO system on February 22, 2017 resulted in a configuration error. This configuration error caused the SSO issue.

In the new version of SSO, the SSO app would still load, and users were presented with the login screen as expected. However, after authenticating, the site would not pass any SSO information to the application to confirm that a user logged in. This was the cause of broken site functionality.

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The SSO service monitors were configured to verify that the logon page was working; however, the information exchange between the login and the application was not being monitored.

Resolution

The configuration was corrected and the service was restarted. It was then verified that user information was correctly transferring to the application from the SSO.

Communications (Internal)

A number of users reported site functionality issues to the ITSC, who then notified the ITS Middleware team.

ITSPP Communications (External)

The IT Support Centre issued a 'Service' notification using the ITS Notification Tool after receiving feedback from users. The notification was updated by the ITS Middleware team upon resolution of the issue.

Lessons Learned

In order to prevent this issue from re-occurring, ITS Middleware will update the monitoring configuration to verify the information exchange, such that if the same issue re-occurs in the future, there is an immediate alert.

Testing of all future changes will occur in our test environment before making the changes available to our user base.

Action Items

The Site24x7 and Sermon monitors for https://login.queensu.ca have been modified to ensure that the information exchange is functional, such that ITS will be immediately notified if this issue should re-occur.

Additionally, a new restart procedure will be created for SSO, which will include verifying information exchange using any ITS application.

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