



IBM Software Group

IBM WebSphere® Partner Gateway V6.1.1

HTTP basic authentication



@business on demand.

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This presentation covers the support for HTTP basic authentication in WebSphere Partner Gateway V6.1.1 release.

Agenda

- Understanding basic authentication
- How basic authentication works in prior versions
- What's new in this release



By the end of this session, you will have an understanding on the basic authentication feature and how the previous version of partner gateway supported basic authentication. Also, you will see what's new in this release.

Section

Understanding basic authentication



This section helps to understand the basic authentication concept.

Basic authentication - Definition

- Allows HTTP server to authenticate the originator of the request
- To be used over SSL to avoid loss of credential (user name and password) information



Basic authentication provides a means to authenticate the sender of the request before actually processing the HTTP request. This protects servers against denial of service attacks.

The way it works is, the client who is initiating the HTTP request provides a user-name and password, which is base-64 encoded and placed as a HTTP header. The recipient of the message is expected to first authenticate the credentials and process the request further, only when the authentication is successful. Although the user name and password are base64 encoded, to avoid the password being exposed to others, basic authentication is always used over an SSL connection.

Section

Basic authentication in earlier versions



This section helps you understand basic authentication support that was provided in prior versions of WebSphere Partner Gateway.

Basic authentication in previous release

- Supported only for Web-Services channel
- Authentication was done at Business Processing Engine (BPE) and not at Receiver
- Format of Authentication Header
 - ▶ `<business-id>/<username>:<password`



In earlier versions of WebSphere Partner Gateway, basic authentication was supported only for Web services protocol. Also, the authentication was done at BPE so that the request with credential that is not valid will get processed, but will fail at the BPE.

Section

What is new in this release



This section provides an overview on what's new in Partner Gateway V6.1.1

What is new

- Basic authentication is now done at receiver
- Extended for all protocols, not just to web-services
- Allows authentication before data is processed, reducing denial of service attacks
- Users can now receive binary data from external partners
- Format of basic authentication header:
 - <Business-id>/base64encoded{<username>:<password>}
 - Base64encoded{<username>:<password>}
- Can specify the sending and receiving partners business ids in the URL, as shown:
 - ▶ Http://<host name>:<port>/**bcgreceiver/receiver?to=<tobusinessid>&from=<fromBusinessID>**



In this release, basic authentication function is done at the receiver. This enables the basic authentication support for all business protocols transported over HTTP. This way, the sender is authenticated before processing the message and hence, it provides fair amount of protection from denial of service attacks.

Also, the new solution will now authenticate user at HTTP receiver and sends back an authorization failed message if the authentication fails. For binary data that is sent over HTTP, you can specify the sending and receiving partners business IDs in the HTTP URL as query string, as shown on the slide.

Enabling basic authentication

The screenshot displays the configuration page for an HTTP receiver. The receiver name is 'httpReceiver', its status is 'Enabled', and its transport is 'HTTP/S'. Under the 'Receiver Configuration' section, the operation mode is 'Production' and the URI is '/bcgreceiver/Receiver'. The 'Sync Routing' section shows two parameters: 'Maximum Synchronous Timeout (Seconds)' set to 300 and 'Maximum Simultaneous Synchronous Connections' set to 100. The 'Basic Authentication' checkbox is currently unchecked and is highlighted with a red rectangular box. Below this, the 'Handlers' section is visible, with a 'Configuration Point Handlers' dropdown menu set to 'Select One'. The footer of the console shows 'HTTP basic authentication' and '© 2008 IBM Corporation'.

Here is the screen capture for enabling basic authentication.

If basic authentication flag is ON and the headers have the correct authentication information, then authentication will succeed and document is sent for further processing.

If this flag is ON and the headers have the incorrect authentication information, then basic authentication will fail and the document is not processed at the receiver.

If this flag is ON and there is no basic authentication information, then it will take the same path as authentication failed.

If this FLAG is OFF, then the receiver will not perform basic authentication even if the header has authentication information.

For all failures that can occur while authenticating the sender, events are logged by the receiver.

Section

Summary



Here is the summary of the basic authentication feature.

Summary

- Basic authentication is now done at the receiver
- This extends basic authentication support to all protocols
- Now, users can receive binary data from external partners
 - TO partner is always the default internal partner unless specified
- Supports the old format of basic authentication headers to make it compatible with earlier versions



Basic authentication is now done at the receiver (HTTP). This extends basic authentication support to all protocols. Also, you can receive binary data from external partners and TO partner is always the default internal partner unless specified. This version of the product supports the old format of basic authentication headers for compatibility with earlier versions.

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