

A faint, stylized illustration in the background shows a person sitting at a desk with a computer monitor and keyboard. The person is looking at the screen, and the overall scene is rendered in a light blue line-art style against the solid blue background.

# It's easy!

**The difference between  
IP/proxy and OpenAthens  
single sign-on.**

# Access knowledge the easy way

With our simple, secure technology OpenAthens enables people to access the knowledge they need to achieve great things.

Older systems can pose a significant security risk. IP addresses are open to various methods of abuse and the lack of transparency makes accurate usage reporting difficult.

## How we help:



### Happy users

The simple interface will reduce user queries.

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### Minimal admin

Our tools make it easy to categorise and allocate resources to users.

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### Peace of mind

No compromise on security, all information remains safe.

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### Statistics and insight

We collect data and show you patterns of engagement.

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### Leave the difficult stuff to us

Our optimised solution enables integration with other systems.

# Here's a comparison of the two technologies:

	OpenAthens	IP/proxy
Single sign-on	Users sign in once for all online resources and services using their organizational credentials.	Some proxy solutions connect via single sign-on.
Resource management, granular user and group level reporting	Make data-driven budget and subscription decisions based on our reports at group and individual level. Curate resources and add content discovery widgets in the MyAthens portal. Use the reporting tool to visualise data.	Some proxy solutions provide reports at group or department level.
User management	Manage all your users, resources and reports in our easy to use dashboard. Integrate with any local directory. Create and disable accounts for individuals or groups.	Text file based system for user management or the option to connect to a local directory.
Integrate with your existing library directories and systems	Integration with LDAP, ADFS, AD, Azure, any system that speaks SAML.	Some proxy solutions support authentication methods on one server.
Protects user privacy	A pseudonymous identifier that represents the user is sent to providers.  Example: ahf8543w0_da3ryrYYisyd8	IP address that represents the institution is sent to providers.  Example: 192.158.1.38
Protection against security or licence breaches	Specific user is disabled and notification sent to admin. Supports multi-factor authentication.	Entire organization is disabled until the user is identified.
Helps you remain BAU during a natural disaster or pandemic	Reliable, resilient and scalable cloud-based solution.	Onsite servers subject to fire, floods and other natural disasters. VPNs do not have capacity to scale.
Personalize user experience	Enable saved searches, annotated content, preferences	Not possible with IP-based access.
OpenAthens supports	✓	✓

OpenAthens provides flexibility to adapt to changing workflows, peace of mind against fraud and misuse, and the transparency to make informed decisions.

Visit [openathens.org](https://openathens.org) today for more information.



# OpenAthens

Authentication



# IP/proxy

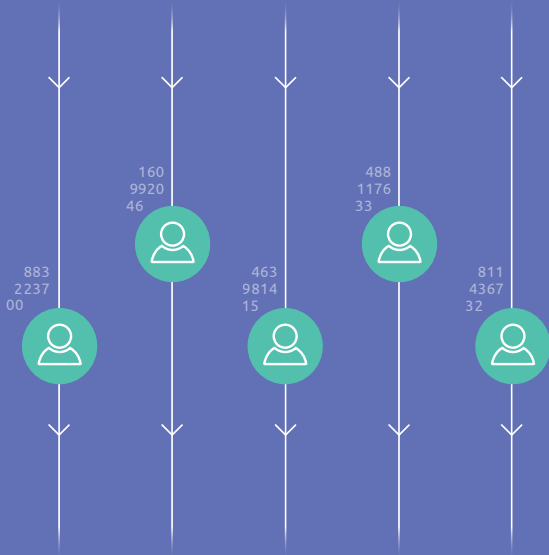
Recognition

Simple set up



SAML handshake

Secure – end user / publisher / library



Two way transparency / individual stats

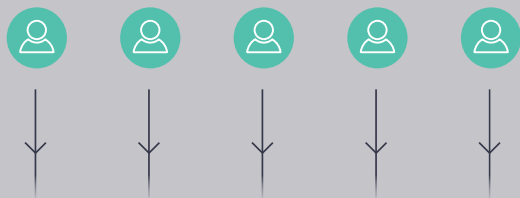
Publisher



Global standard in authentication

**Simplicity** for the library

Technical set up



IP recognition

Insecure / open to spoofing

Proxy server



Anonymous users

No individual details / anonymous

Publisher



Legacy technology / work around

**Complexity** for the library

# Glossary of terms

## ■ Identity provider (IdP)

An organization or product that confirms user identities and attributes to enable them to access content owned by service providers. Examples of IdP products are OpenAthens, Shibboleth and Ping Federate.

## ■ IP address

A numerical reference (e.g. 123.123.123.0) that identifies the location of a device on a network or the wider internet, managed globally.

## ■ IP recognition

A form of access management that grants access to resources based on the IP address of a user's device.

## ■ OpenAthens

An access management system for organizations or content providers (IdPs or SPs in SAML terms) that facilitates SSO access to subscription content.

## ■ Proxy service

Software that acts as an intermediary between users and content. Often used to facilitate remote access to subscription-based content.

## ■ Remote access

Allows users to access library holdings (particularly subscription content) with their normal login credentials when they are outside of the institution network (for example, at home or using a mobile device).

## ■ SAML

Security Assertion Markup Language. A protocol for exchanging security information between identity providers and service providers.

## ■ Service provider (SP)

An organization that provides content or services.

## ■ SSO

Single Sign-on. Providing users with access to many different systems through a single set of login details.

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