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A typical situation in most enterprise architectures is maintaining separate directories for external and internal users. The internal users are the staffs of the organization even though the external could be the suppliers, store contractors and customers. In situations wherein all users would desire to access an application, it may not be able to help multiple data directories. In this case, it becomes essential to use a virtual directory to integrate directories in a single namespace.

It would be ideal to have local directory intended for user information while the external directory will be used for authentication. For example, a local directory for the user data and for authentication is the AD or Active Directory. There are two available techniques for an organization to attain this namely password synchronization from Active Directory and the second one is by using virtual directory to pass on authentication to the AD even though delegating all of the other queries into the local directory. In most cases, it is not always all right to use password synchronization technology. That is why the second choice which is the virtual directory server is more appropriate for authentication.

Most businesses have single enterprise directory which stores the common user attributes to be used for authentication. In case the application will need additional attributes, usually it would become very hard to add attributes into the enterprise directory. A virtual directory can then be used in extending enterprise directory by forming an edge directory which joins the enterprise directory to attributes which are application specific.

Many of those organizations find the use of a virtual directory to be significantly important especially when it comes to data security. Although some of them would setup separate LDAP proxy to protect LDAP databases and directories, others feel like they need not to do that because using a virtual directory alone can give them the same degree of security and protection for their data stores and contents. A virtual directory has a special function of proxying your LDAP databases and directories giving you peace of mind that no attacks on them will take place without your knowledge.

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