

LDAP and vCard

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Pros of using LDAP for vCard access

- Good protocol for full or partial retrieval of vCards & for searching for vCARD information
- Many vCARD properties from RFC 2426 map 1-to-1 to standard LDAP attributes
- LDAP server can manage other user or service related information
- (Minor) vCARD format is similar to LDIF, so it is easier to implement in clients which already support LDIF

Cons of using LDAP for vCard access

- Mapping standard vCard properties/parameters to LDAP makes sense, but vCard and LDAP models are different
 - vCard allows for arbitrary parameters, which can't be mapped to LDAP
 - In particular, LDAP attribute tag options (like language tags) are not good enough
 - vCard supports property grouping feature
 - LDAP can hold attributes which can't be represented as vCard properties
- Lack of standard LDAP schema for vCard information
 - Clients need to be configured to map vCard properties
 - Complexity for client writers and users
 - (Solvable) InetOrgPerson is the closest object class, but it is non standard

Cons of using LDAP for vCard access (cont)

- Read/write access is not common
 - Policy reasons
 - Various LDAP servers implement different Access Control models, no single standard. Many sysadmins and users don't understand access controls, as they are hard to understand

Example vCard

BEGIN:vCard
VERSION:3.0
FN:ALEXEY MELNIKOV
ORG:Isode Limited
TEL;TYPE=CELL:+44 7753 759732
Office1.TEL;TYPE=VOICE,MSG,WORK:+442087830203
Office1.TEL;TYPE=FAX,WORK:+442087839292
Office1.EMAIL;TYPE=INTERNET,PREF:alexey.melnikov@isode.com
Office2.EMAIL;TYPE=INTERNET:aamelnikov@netscape.net
URL:<http://www.melnikov.ca>
X-FOO:BAR
END:vCard

Example LDAP entry (LDIF)

```
dn::  
  Y2490JDQu9C10LrRgdC10Lkg0JzQtdC70YzQvdC40LrQvtCyLCB  
  vdT1TdGFmZiwgbz1Jc29kZQ==  
cn:: 0JDQu9C10LrRgdC10Lkg0JzQtdC70YzQvdC40LrQvtCy  
sn:: 0JzQtdC70YzQvdC40LrQvtCy  
o: Isode  
title: Senior Software Engineer  
givenName:: 0JDQu9C10LrRgdC10Lk=  
mail: alexey.melnikov@isode.com  
mail: aamelnikov@netscape.net  
seeAlso: cn=other team member, ou=Staff, o=Isode  
mobile: +44 7753 759732  
displayName: Alexey Melnikov  
gecos: Alexei Melnikov
```

Conclusions

- LDAP is probably not suitable for read/write access to parts of vCards, e.g. editing of vCard
- It is worth defining a bidirectional mapping between standardized LDAP attributes and standardized vCard properties, extending schemas as necessary
- Is this something that should be done as a WG item?
 - If there is any interest to form a WG