How (Not) to Use OAuth

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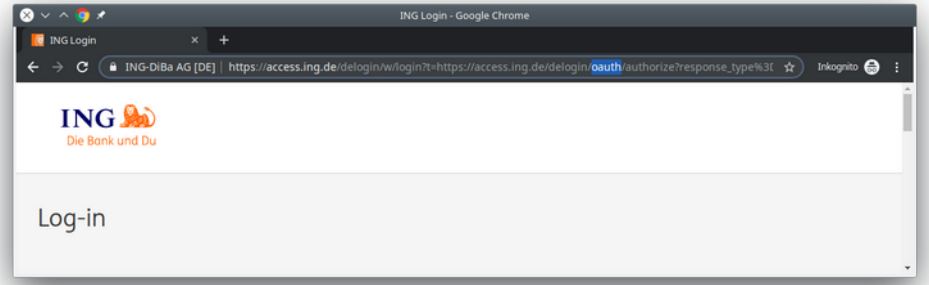
BlackDirect: Microsoft Azure Account Takeover

December 02, 2019 | | Omer Tsarfati |

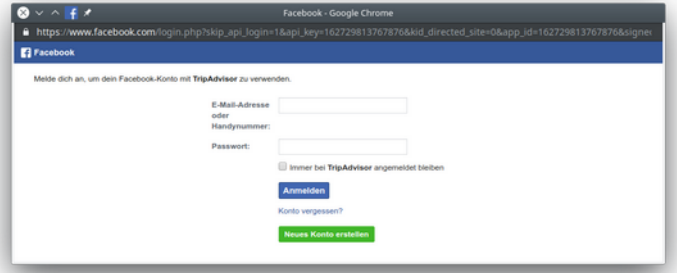
Over the last few weeks, my team and I have been working on research associated with Microsoft Azure and Microsoft OAuth 2.0. Over the course of that time, we found a vulnerability that allows for the takeover of Microsoft Azure Accounts. Affecting specific Microsoft's OAuth 2.0 applications, this

Who is familiar with OAuth?

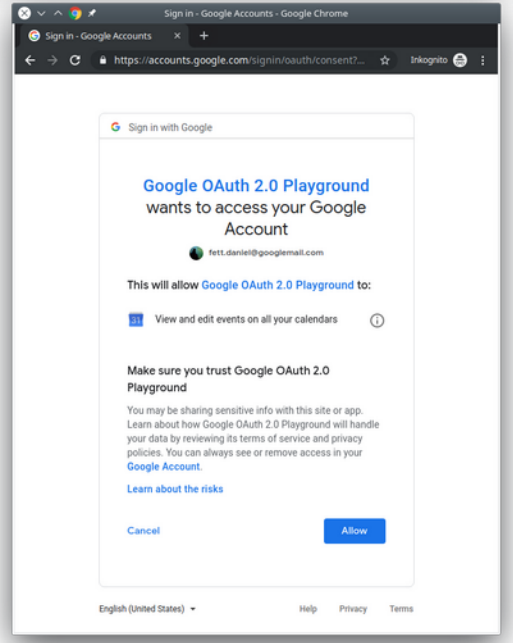
OAuth 2.0 in the Wild



Banking



Facebook



Google

Apple

OAuth is a standard
for federated authorization

Authorization

Authentication

Say OAuth is an Authentication standard again.

I dare you. I double dare you.

Authorization OAuth

authorizes

Photo Editor

to access

Google Photos account

User

Client

Authorization Server & Resource Server

Authentication OAuth OpenID

authenticates to

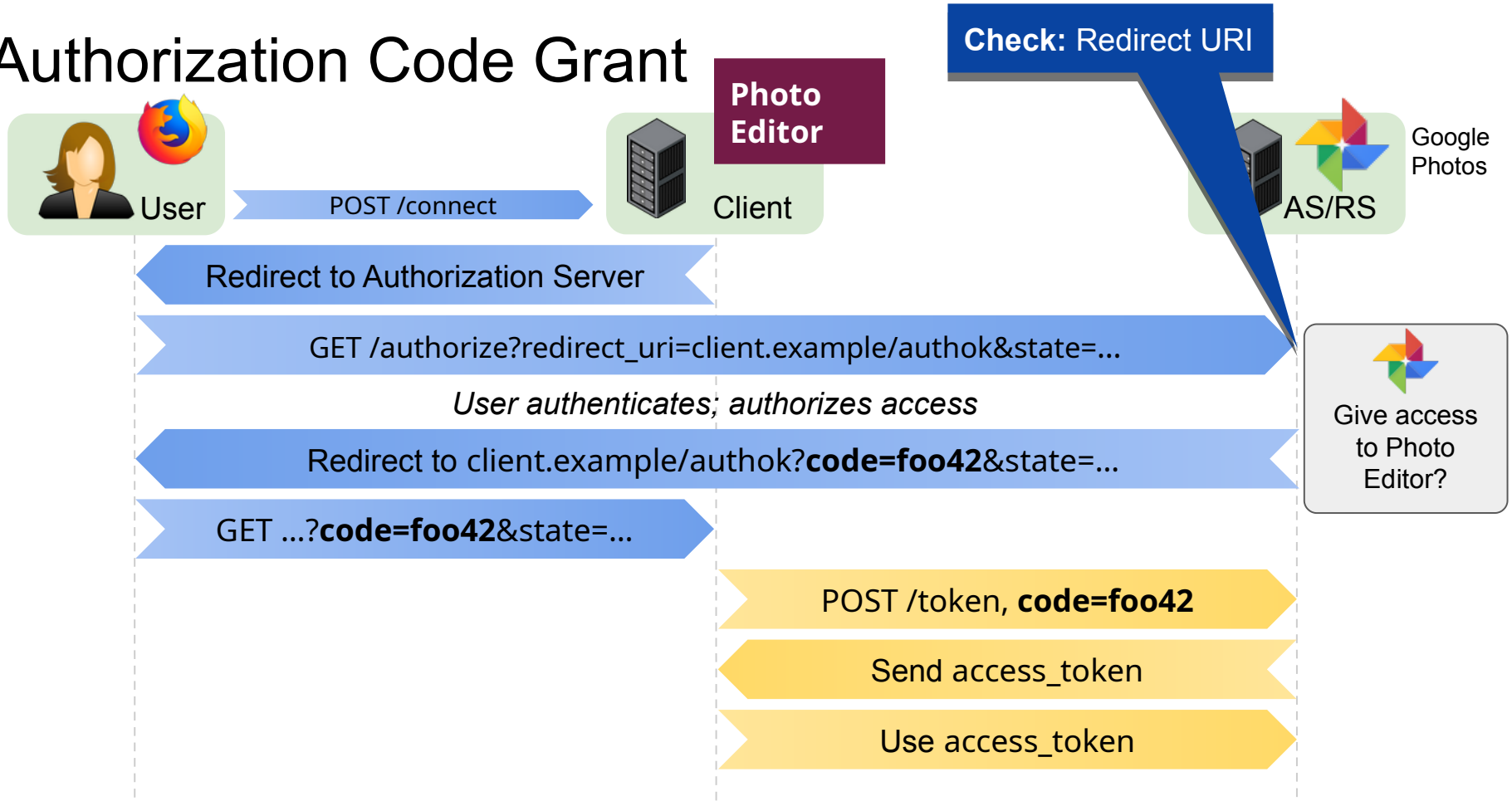
using identity from

User

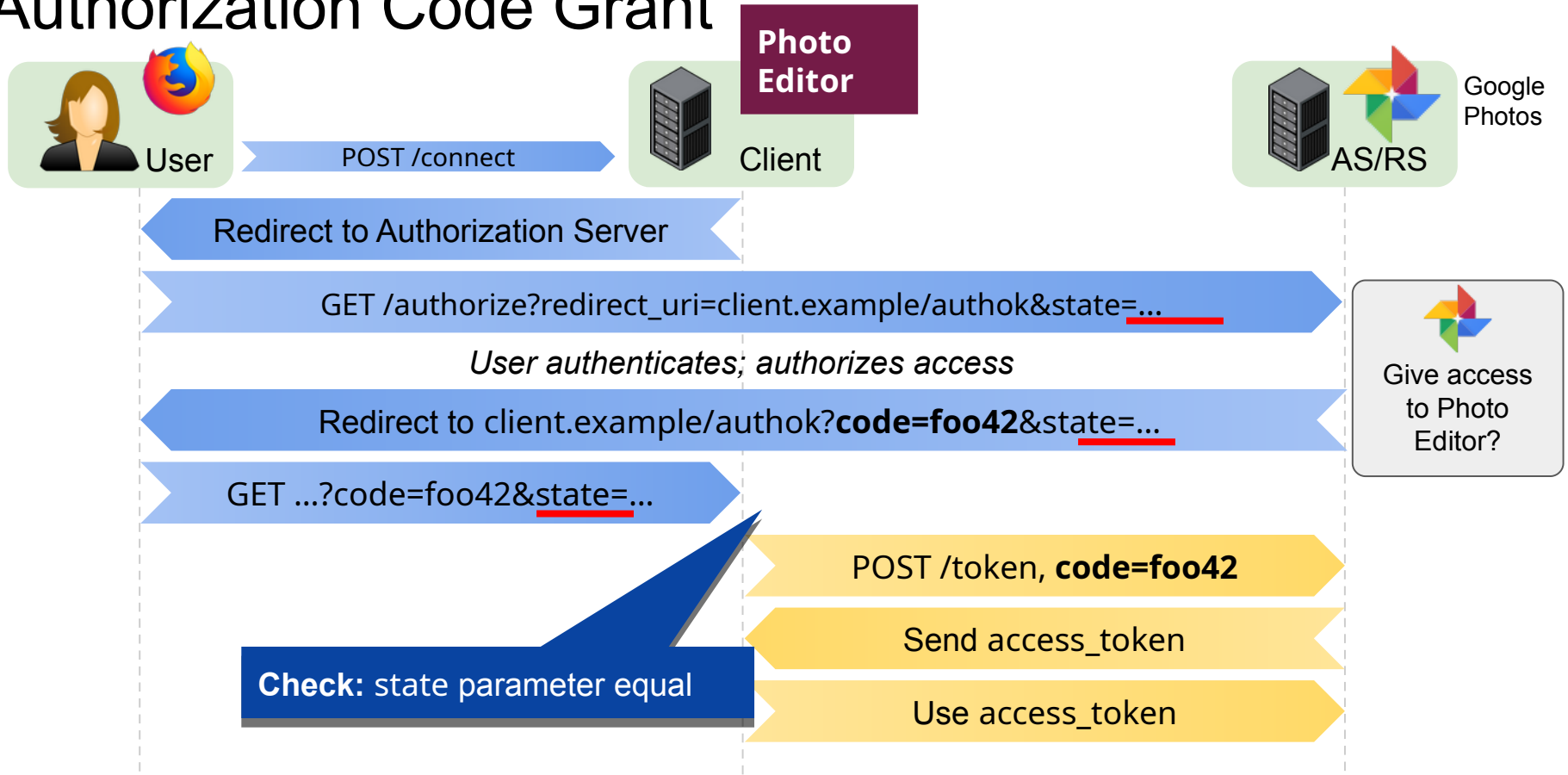
Relying Party

Identity Provider

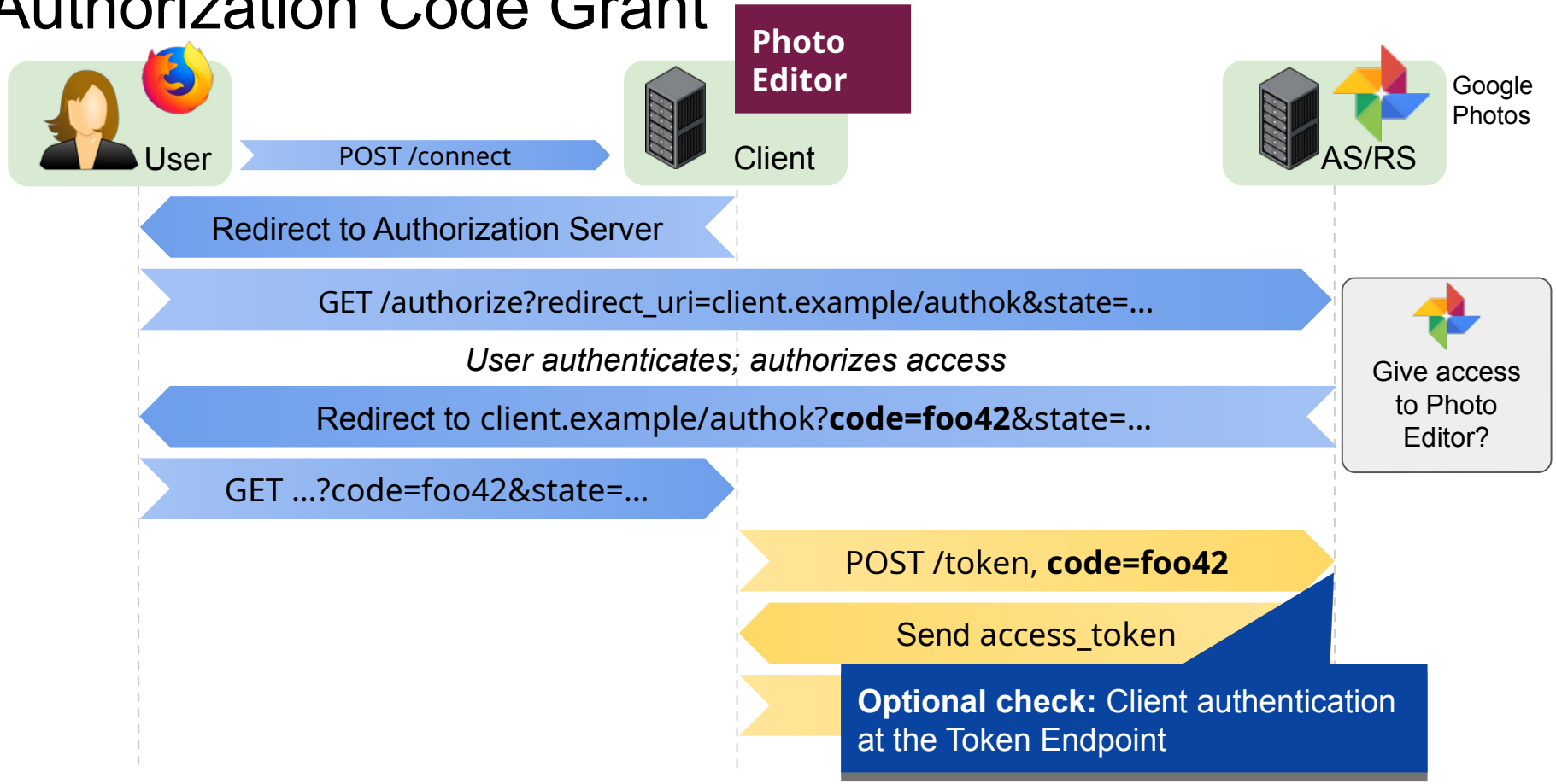
Authorization Code Grant



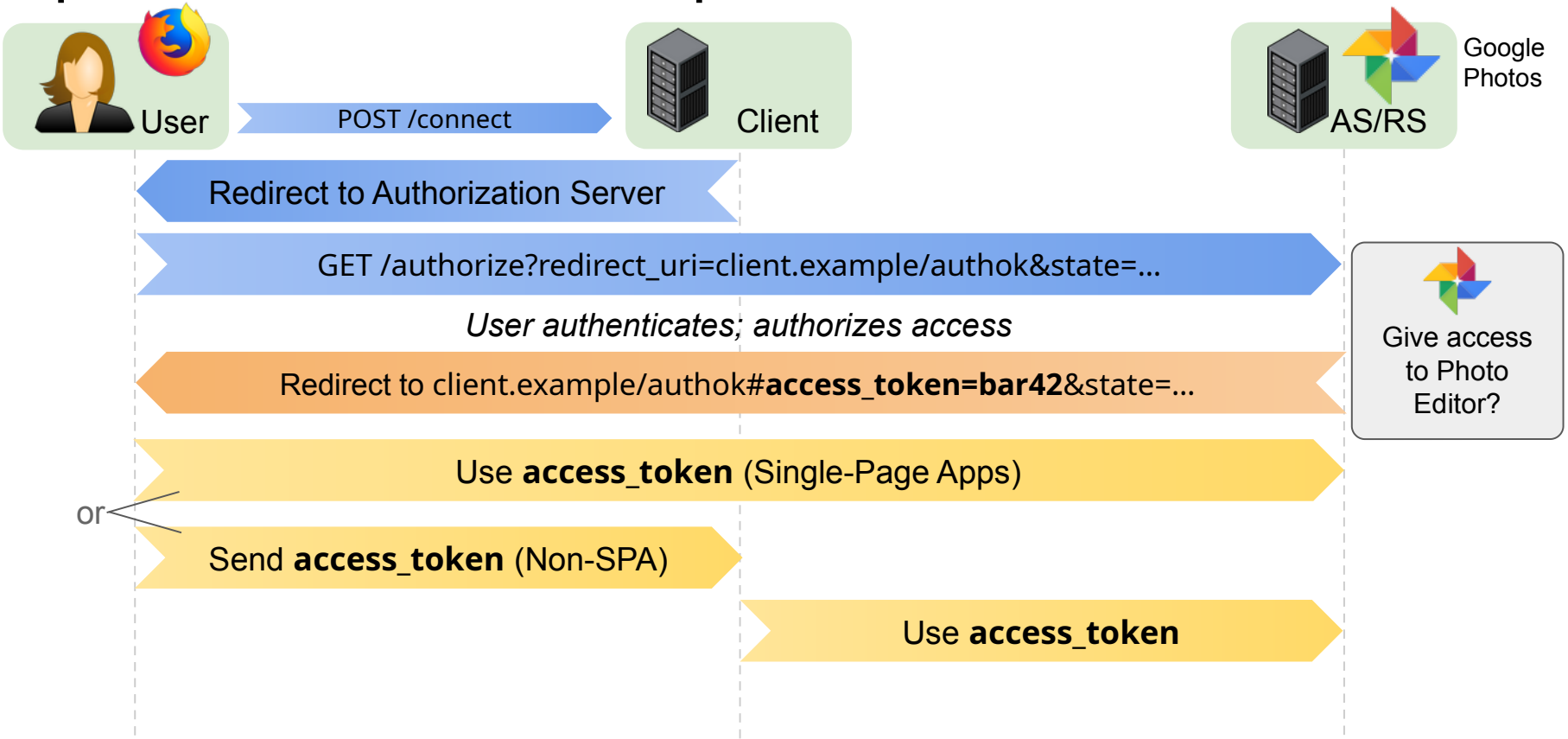
Authorization Code Grant



Authorization Code Grant



Implicit Grant — the “simpler OAuth”?



Seven Years after RFC6749:

Security Challenges for OAuth

Challenge 1: Implementation Flaws

- We still see many implementation flaws

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- Known anti-patterns are still used
  - Insufficient redirect URI checking (code/token is redirected to attacker)
  - state parameter is not used properly to defend against CSRF
  - …

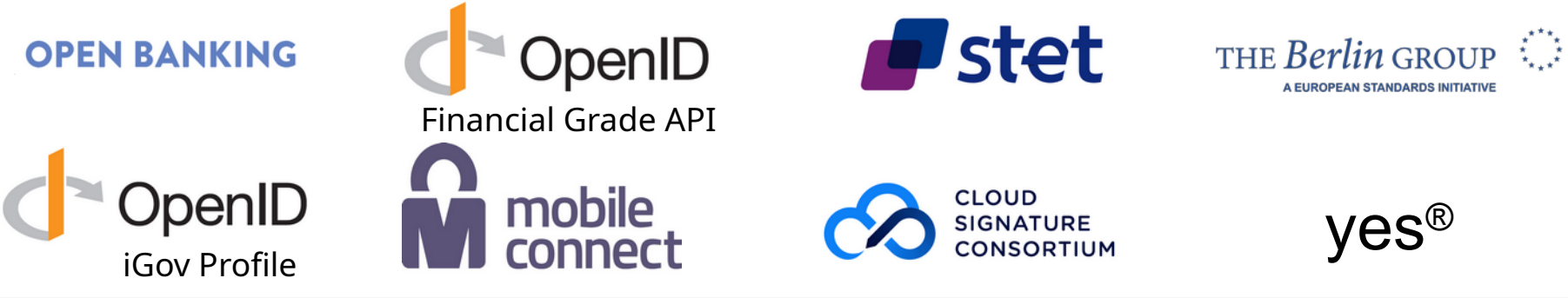
- [Li et al., 2014]
  60 chinese clients, **more than half** vulnerable to CSRF
- [Yang et al., 2016]
  Out of 405 clients, **55%** do not handle state (CSRF protection) correctly
- [Shebab et al., 2015]
  25% of OAuth clients in Alexa Top 10000 vulnerable to CSRF
- [Chen et al., 2014]
  89 of 149 mobile clients vulnerable to one or more attacks
- [Wang et al., 2013]
  Vulnerabilities in Facebook PHP SDK and other OAuth SDKs
- [Sun et al., 2012]
  96 Clients, **almost all** vulnerable to one or more attacks

Challenge 1: Implementation Flaws

- We still see many implementation flaws
- Known anti-patterns are still used
  - Insufficient redirect URI checking (code/token is redirected to attacker)
  - state parameter is not used properly to defend against CSRF
  - …
- Technological changes bring new problems
  - E.g., URI fragment handling in browsers changed
    → Vulnerability when used with open redirectors

Challenge 2: High-Stakes Environments

New Use Cases, e.g., Open Banking, require a very high level of security

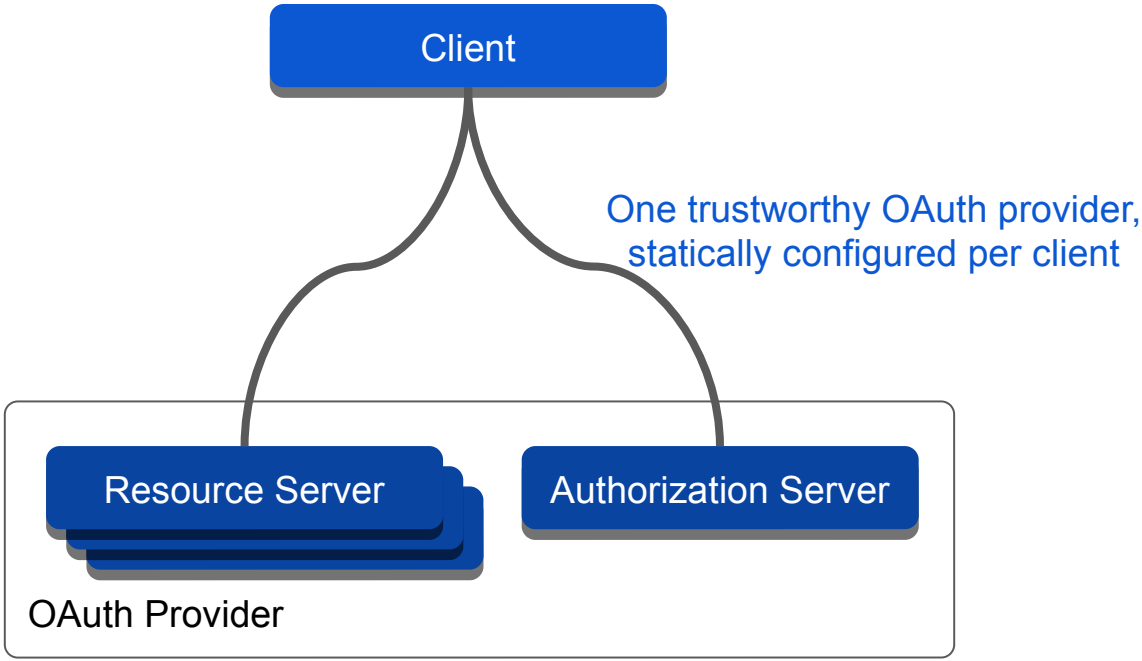


Also: eIDAS/QES (legally binding electronic signatures)

Far beyond the scope of the original security threat model!

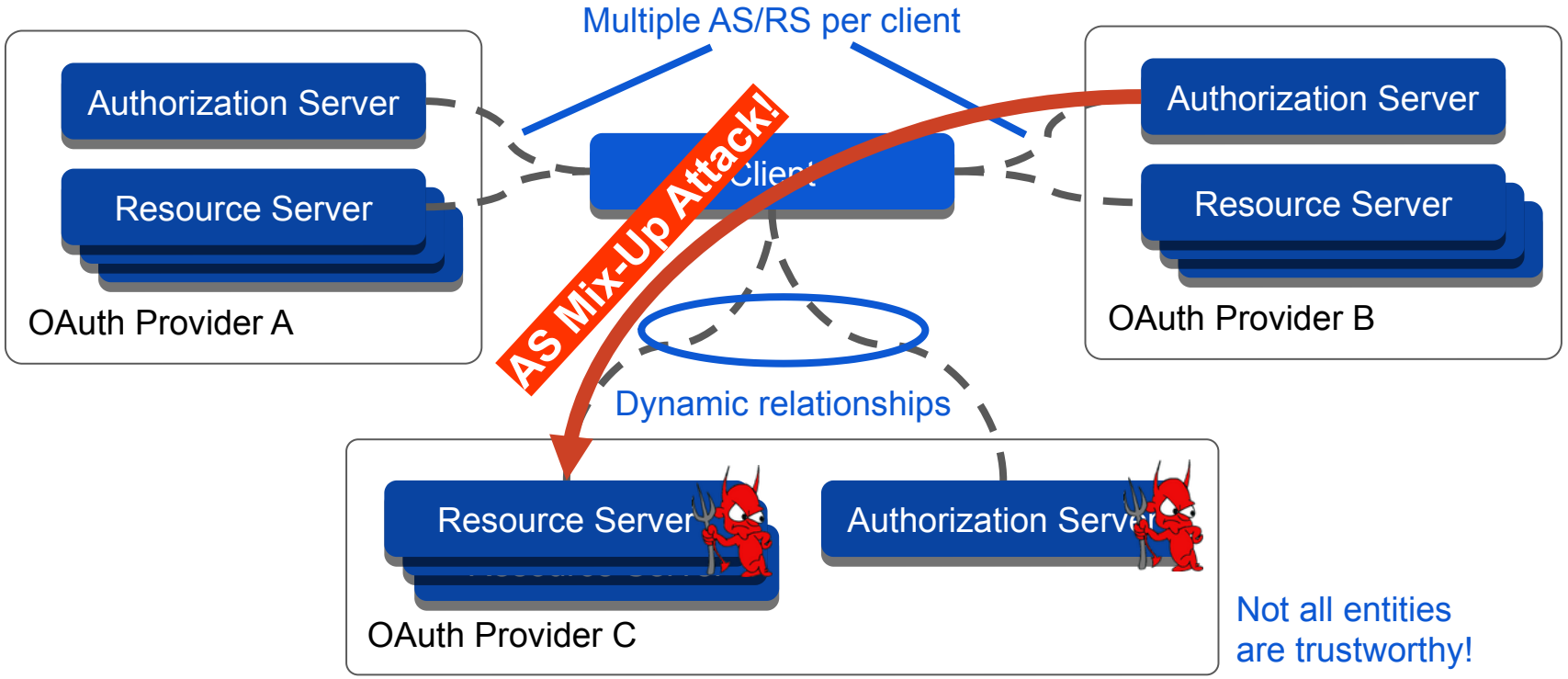
Challenge 3: Dynamic and Complex Setups

Originally anticipated:



Challenge 3: Dynamic and Complex Setups

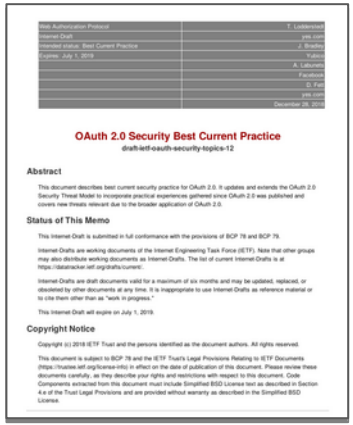
Today:



How to address these challenges?

OAuth 2.0 Security Best Current Practice RFC

- Under development at the IETF
- Refined and enhanced security guidance for OAuth 2.0 implementers
- Complements existing security guidance in RFCs 6749, 6750, and 6819



OAuth 2.0 Security Best Current Practice

draft-ietf-oauth-security-topics-12

Abstract

This document describes best current security practice for OAuth 2.0. It updates and extends the OAuth 2.0 Security Threat Model to incorporate practical experiences gathered since OAuth 2.0 was published and covers new threats relevant due to the broader application of OAuth 2.0.

Status of This Memo

This Internet-Draft is submitted in full conformance with the provisions of BCP 78 and BCP 79.

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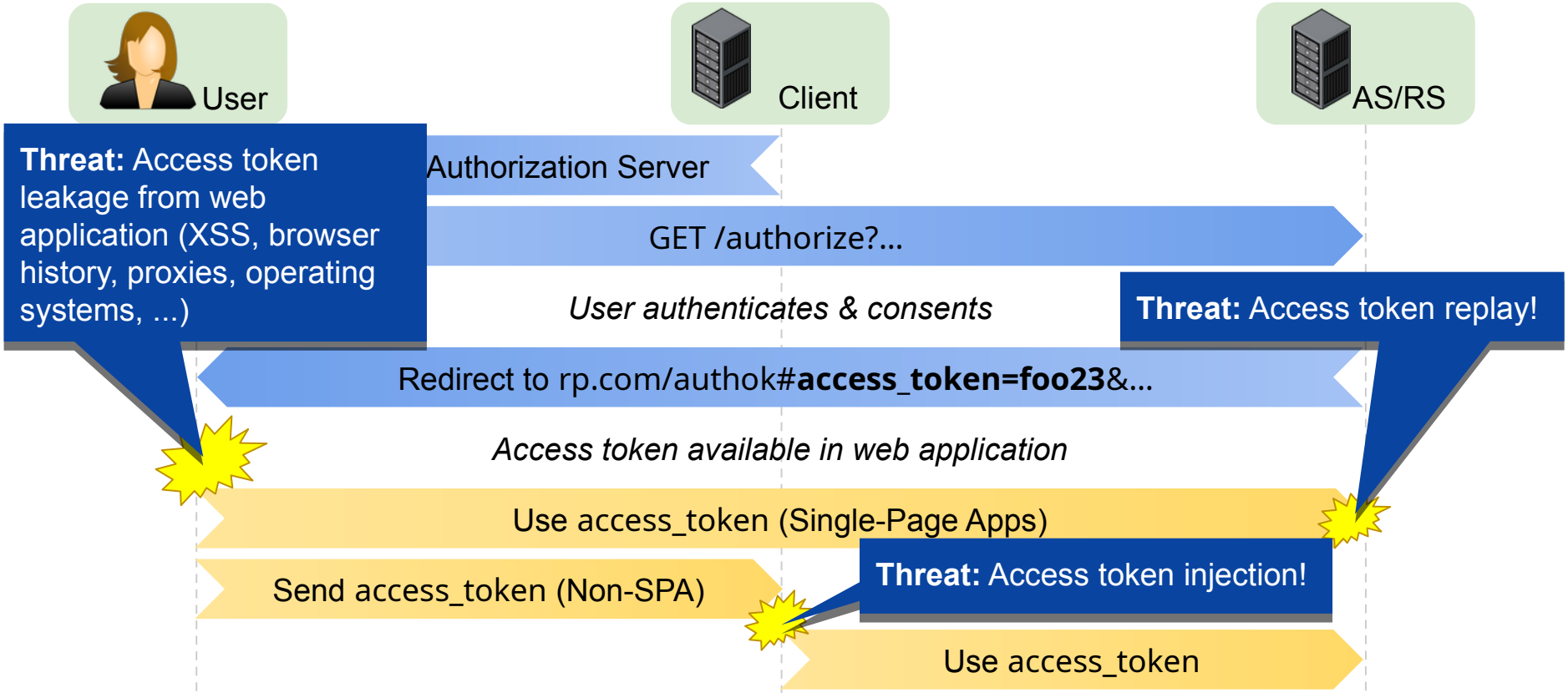
- Updated, more comprehensive Threat Model
- Description of Attacks and Mitigations
- Simple and actionable recommendations

Input from **practice** and **formal analysis**

IETF

The Five Most Important Recommendations in the OAuth Security BCP

① Do not use the OAuth Implicit Grant any longer!



The Implicit Grant ...

- sends **powerful** and **potentially long-lived** tokens through the browser,
- lacks features for **sender-constraining** access tokens,
- provides no protection against access token **replay and injection**, and
- provides no **defense in depth** against XSS, URL leaks, etc.!

Why is Implicit even in RFC6749?

No Cross-Origin Resource Sharing in 2012!
⇒ No way of (easily) using OAuth in SPAs.

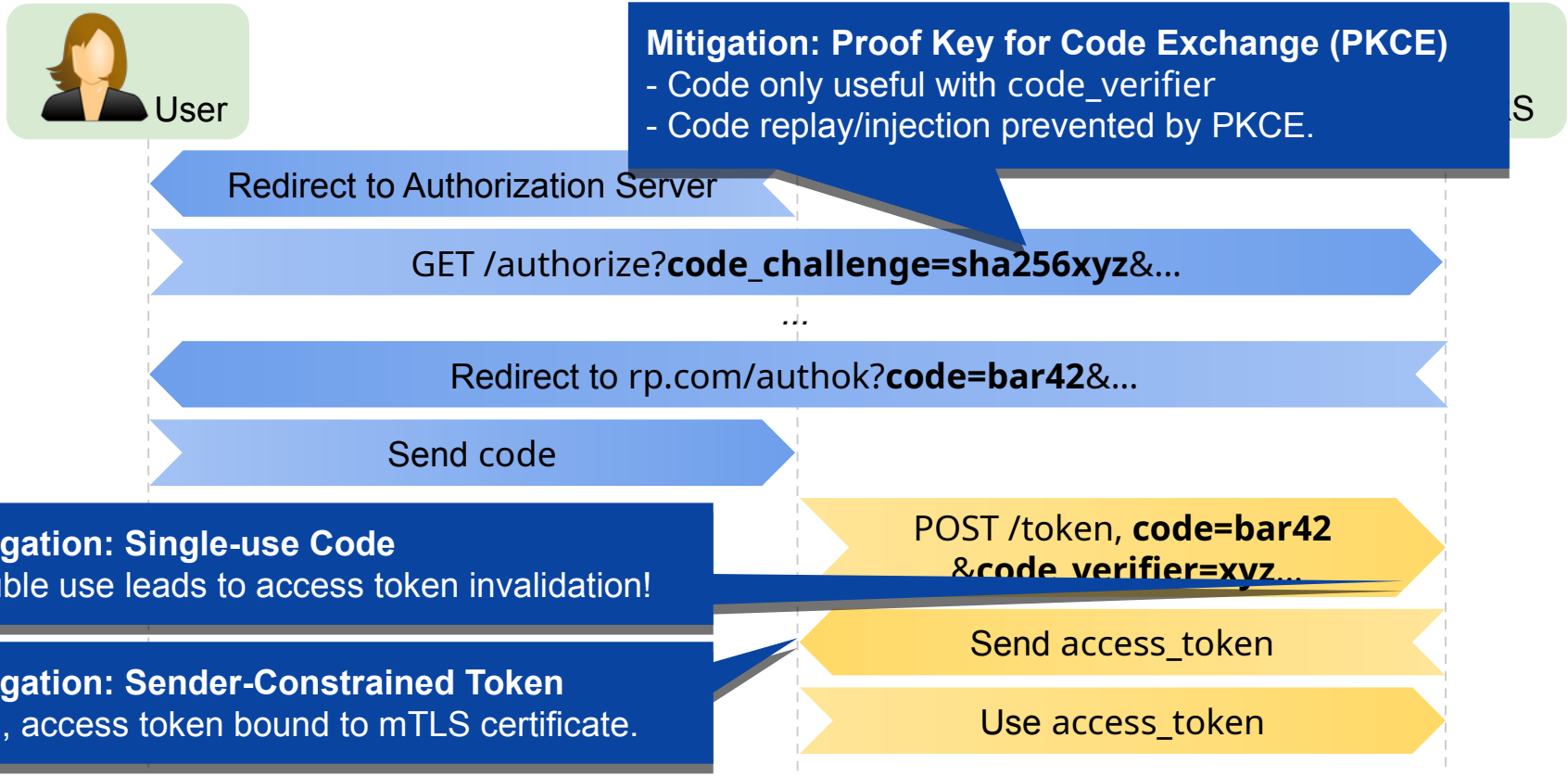
⇒ Not needed in 2019!

Recommendation

“Clients SHOULD NOT use the implicit grant [...]”

“Clients SHOULD instead use the response type code (aka authorization code grant type) [...]”

Use the Authorization Code Grant!



Authorization Code Grant with PKCE & mTLS …

- protects against **code and token replay and injection,**
- supports **sender-constraining** of access tokens,
- provides **defense in depth!**

Recommendation

“Clients utilizing the authorization grant type MUST use PKCE [...]”

“Authorization servers SHOULD use TLS-based methods for sender-constrained access tokens [...]”

② Stop Redirects Gone Wild!

- Enforce exact redirect URI matching
  - Simpler to implement on AS side
  - Adds protection layer against open redirection
- Clients MUST avoid open redirectors!
  - Use whitelisting of target URLs
  - or authenticate redirection request

③ Prevent CSRF Attacks!

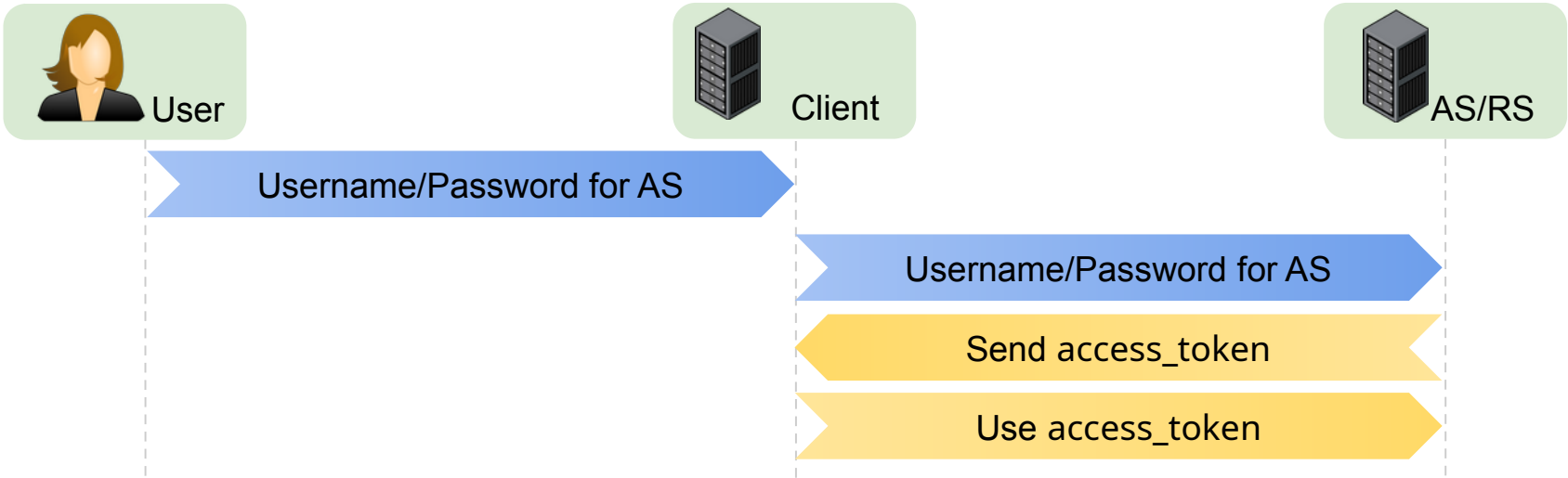
- CSRF attacks MUST be prevented
- RFC 6749 and RFC 6819 recommend use of state parameter
- Updated advice:
  - If PKCE is used, state is not needed for CSRF protection
  - state can again be used for application state

④ Limit Privileges of Access Tokens!

- Sender-constraining (mTLS, HTTP Token Binding, or DPoP)
- Receiver-constraining (only valid for certain RS)
- Reduce scope and lifetime and use refresh tokens - defense in depth!

⑤ Do not use the R.O.P.C.G.* any longer!

*Resource Owner Password Credentials Grant



- Client sees username/password of user
- Complicated or impossible to integrate 2-factor-authentication
- Stopgap solution for migrating to OAuth flows

What else?

- Prevent Mix-Up attacks!
- Protect Refresh Tokens!
- Do not use HTTP status code 307 for redirections
  - User credentials may be leaked to an attacker
- Aim to prevent code leakage from referrer headers and browser history
  - E.g., referrer policies, browser history manipulations, etc.
  - Already common practice among implementers
  - Only one of many lines of defense now
- Use client authentication if possible
  - Client authenticates at the token endpoint
  - More protection for authorization code

Should I even use OAuth?

Absolutely!

- Standards are good
  - Libraries (save time & money; battle-proven code)
  - Interoperability
- Years of experience, dozens of security analyses
- Custom-built solutions prone to repeat even the most simple vulnerabilities
- Protection against strong attackers
- Formal proof of security
- But:
  - Read the security advice, including the BCP draft
  - Implement the latest security features
  - Don’t roll your own ~~crypto~~ OAuth!
  - Know your threat model

Formal Analysis

- Analysis based on formal models of systems
- “Offline testing of application logic”
  - Before writing a single line of code
  - Finds regressions caused by technological changes
- Successfully used for cryptographic protocols
  - Recently used for TLS 1.3
  - Helps to write precise specifications
  - Provides security guarantees - within limits
- Not common for web applications/standards yet
- → Proof for OAuth 2.0

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REPLY SPIKE

Links, latest BCP draft, papers, etc.:

`https://danielfett.de`

Now:

Q&A

OAuth Security Workshop
Trondheim, July 22-24
`https://osw2020.com`

seccamp cologne

Security Barcamp
Cologne, Apr. 4-5
`https://sec.camp`

Research Papers

[Fett et al., 2014] Daniel Fett, Ralf Küsters, and Guido Schmitz. “
An Expressive Model for the Web Infrastructure: Definition and Application to the BrowserID SSO System”.

[Fett et al., 2016] Daniel Fett, Ralf Küsters, and Guido Schmitz. “A Comprehensive Formal Security Analysis of OAuth 2.0”.

[Li et al., 2014] Wanpeng Li and Chris J. Mitchell. “Security issues in OAuth 2.0 SSO implementations”.

[Yang et al., 2016] Ronghai Yang et al. “Model-based Security Testing: An Empirical Study on OAuth 2.0 Implementations”.

[Shebab et al., 2015] Mohamed Shehab and Fadi Mohsen. “Towards Enhancing the Security of OAuth Implementations in Smart Phones”.

[Chen et al., 2014] Eric Y. Chen et al. “OAuth Demystified for Mobile Application Developers”.

[Wang et al., 2013] Rui Wang et al. “Explicating SDKs: Uncovering Assumptions Underlying Secure Authentication and Authorization”.

[Sun et al., 2012] San-Tsai Sun and Konstantin Beznosov. “The Devil is in the (Implementation) Details: An Empirical Analysis of OAuth SSO Systems”.