Online retailers and digital businesses commonly ask customers to create a personal account, and thereby establish a digital identity. This digital identity enables customers to log on and be securely authenticated before accessing services and doing business with the company. Companies use the associated personal information to take and fulfill orders, communicate with customers, provide individualized marketing and real-time personalization, and perform business analytics.

As customers establish their digital identity, organizations must obtain their consent to use the personal information in adherence with a growing number of global privacy regulations. These include the European Union’s General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA), and Canada’s Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA).

Companies are also required to grant customers the right to view, modify, and revoke consent at any time and to protect the privacy of personal customer information.

If customers encounter friction as they set up and manage their digital identities, performing activities such as registration, account creation, login/password management, and preference management, they are likely to opt for a costly phone call, email, or chat with customer service—or even abandon the transaction altogether. Common friction points include poor usability, too many steps in the process, slow load times, the inability to use the device of their choice, or account fragmentation where different apps or sites from the same company require different accounts.

**What to Look for in a Solution to Improve Customer Experience**

Organizations seeking to reduce friction in the registration and password management process should consider a customer identity and access management (CIAM) solution. A CIAM solution will not only streamline and simplify the digital identity management experience for customers, but also meet their organization’s own business requirements. Here’s what organizations should consider when they look for a CIAM solution:

**Use Case**

**Reducing Friction in the Digital Identity Registration Process**

Organizations must obtain consent to use the personal information in adherence with a growing number of global privacy regulations.
Considerations for Meeting Customer Requirements

1. Enable Customers to Effortlessly Sign In with Their Choice of Device

A growing number of new and returning users will be using mobile phones, tablet devices, or even screenless connected devices such as smart speakers with speech assistants. These users expect a properly designed user experience, with the solution rendering correctly with different device orientations, form factors, and resolutions.

2. Minimize Steps Needed for Customers to Register

Customers want the experience of registering and managing their accounts to be simple to perform with minimal steps. A solution that provides social login gives visitors the option to use existing accounts with Google, Facebook, Twitter, WeChat, and other providers to more quickly and easily register at a site. The social networks act as identity providers (IdPs) and allow their users to employ their existing accounts to log into other sites. Users don’t have to create a new account (and remember new credentials), which significantly reduces friction and eliminates a potential barrier for people to sign up on a new site.

3. Eliminate the Need to Remember a Password

The need to create and remember yet another password can prevent customers from setting up a digital identity on a site. In addition, when shoppers are ready to make a purchase on the site and can’t remember their username and password, they may find it easier to leave and purchase at another site with an easier login process. Alternatively, they might check out with a guest account, leaving the organization with little quality contact data to use in future marketing programs. A solution that provides social login removes the need to create (and remember) another password by enabling individuals to use their social login to access their account with your organization. However, if users choose to employ a username and password with the service, the solution should allow them to easily recover access via self-service without the need to contact customer service.
4. Simplify Consent Management
Article 7(3) of GDPR states that “It shall be as easy to withdraw as to give consent.” In other words, organizations are not allowed to provide an easy-to-use form to obtain consent to process personal data and then make it purposely difficult to revoke consent afterward by requiring a complicated bureaucratic process. The solution should simplify the process of viewing, modifying, or withdrawing consent.

5. Deliver High Performance
Performance and reliability are vital to providing the experience customers expect. Site visitors who experience quick load times are more likely to complete any given transaction. Moreover, visitors are more sensitive to slower page speeds early in the customer journey, such as when they are using the registration, login, and authentication pages. A CIAM solution can speed up the registration and login process by intelligently caching data close to end users and by employing elastic autoscaling to accommodate usage spikes. Sophisticated failover and BC/DR capabilities and guaranteed uptime SLAs should ensure high availability worldwide.

6. Streamline Security
Accounts must be protected against abuse through strong user authentication. The solution should give users a choice of easy-to-use two-factor or one-time-password (OTP) authentication.

Considerations for Addressing the Needs of Your Business

1. Increase Registration Rates
Organizations are always looking to increase customer registrations. A solution that uses social login to leverage an existing account and profile reduces friction by simplifying the registration and profile management process. With social login, companies can easily authenticate website visitors, collect the necessary data to begin building a profile, and let them more quickly participate in the activities that brought them to the site. Since not every customer will choose social login, the CIAM solution should also offer a traditional username/password registration for those who prefer that option.
2. Obtain Richer Customer Data
The more information organizations have about customers, the better they can communicate with them, create personalized marketing campaigns, and improve analytics. But an inverse relationship exists between the amount of data requested and registration rates. The more profile data demanded of consumers during registration, the less likely they are to complete the process. One way to create richer profiles without potentially driving away users is through progressive profiling. Progressive profiling lets organizations collect user data incrementally over time. People share more information as their level of interaction with the site increases, allowing organizations to build more detailed profiles without sacrificing registration conversion rates.

3. Build Trusted Relationships With Customers While Complying With Data Privacy Regulations
GDPR, CCPA, PIPEDA, and other regional consumer data protection regulations require brands to track and understand the data they collect and to provide privacy management options directly to consumers. A solution that allows low-friction signup, and supports progressive profile building and customer-facing consent and preference management, turns these new regulations into opportunities to build trusted relationships with customers that lead to greater brand loyalty and higher ROI.

Akamai Identity Cloud delivers a secure, scalable CIAM for large consumer-facing brands that minimizes friction within the digital identity registration process. To learn more about Identity Cloud, visit akamai.com/identitycloud.

Akamai secures and delivers digital experiences for the world’s largest companies. Akamai’s intelligent edge platform surrounds everything, from the enterprise to the cloud, so customers and their businesses can be fast, smart, and secure. Top brands globally rely on Akamai to help them realize competitive advantage through agile solutions that extend the power of their multi-cloud architectures. Akamai keeps decisions, apps, and experiences closer to users than anyone — and attacks and threats far away. Akamai’s portfolio of edge security, web and mobile performance, enterprise access, and video delivery solutions is supported by unmatched customer service, analytics, and 24/7/365 monitoring. To learn why the world’s top brands trust Akamai, visit akamai.com, blogs.akamai.com, or @Akamai on Twitter. You can find our global contact information at akamai.com/locations. Published 12/19.