Asset Bank Implementation at the Arnold Arboretum

The Problem

In 2019 the [Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University](#) decided that they needed to move all their files (images, PDFs, etc.) off of the scattered locations in which they were stored and into a central repository where everyone could access them much more easily. One major need was to provide varying levels of access to the central repository depending on people's roles at the Arboretum. The solution chosen was a digital asset management software called [Asset Bank](#). The Arboretum then reached out to the Identity & Access Management Team (IAM) to integrate Asset Bank with HarvardKey.

The Solution

First, Victoria Lin, the Senior Database Administrator at the Arnold Arboretum reached out to their new software vendor. Asset Bank confirmed that they could support a Single Sign On integration and could also use Harvard's groups to provide access to the various digital assets stored within the system. Next, Victoria talked through the requirements with Jane Hill, Director of Identity and Access Management Services and the Office of the General Counsel to confirm the data to be shared was acceptable under existing policies. Finally the Arboretum staff, the IAM team and Asset Bank personnel worked together to finalize the integration. When the Asset Bank system launches, the Arboretum staff will simply log in with their HarvardKey. The response sent from HarvardKey to the Asset Bank application will map back to their correct level of access for items stored in the repository.

The vital element for this implementation was to be able to map specific users into groups that could then be used to assign them to the right level of access within Asset Bank. The IAM system being used to achieve that is the *Grouper* tool. Daily, the other IAM systems feed data about Harvard users and their affiliations into Grouper. Group reads these data points and adds people into org-based groups, known as reference groups. So the reference groups are automatically updated whenever people's data changes.   The Asset Bank integration also required creating some new groups that needed to be tailored to map to the internal roles used by the Asset Bank application. Victoria worked with IAM to get trained in how to use the Group Service so that she could create the groups Asset Bank required. Then she added people tot he groups to give them specific types of access. Once these groups were created, the HarvardKey system was configured to release this specific set of group members to Asset Bank. The end result was seamless access for end users: after HarvardKey login they were transferred to Asset Bank with the exact permissions they needed to have.

The Result

15,000 items have already been migrated into Asset Bank and many more will be added in the coming months. Using HarvardKey not only provides the right access to the right people but it also provides the additional reassurance of having two-step verification as part of the authentication process.

From Victoria's perspective it is all "working perfectly".   She praised the response time of the various members of the IAM team she worked with and their ability to both explain concepts and implement them.   Victoria learned a lot through the process of integrating Asset Bank with HarvardKey and the Arboretum team got the easily accessible repository they needed to further their work.

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