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Introduction

The OSA work item has been developed actively in several regular and ad-hoc meetings, especially since TSG-CN#6, when OSA's maturity was discussed. In TSG-CN#6 it was agreed to allow the OSA work to continue, targeting Release 99, subject to the condition of having completed all the work by TSG-CN#7.

Status of OSA in SA2

SA2 discussed OSA stage 2 during its last week's meeting. There it was agreed that the stage 2 will be sent for approval to TSG-SA#7. However, it was also recognised that due to lack of time, several topics could not be completed for Release 99:

- User Profile Management
- Charging
- SCS-Framework interface.

SA2 also recognised that if these topics are needed in the first release of OSA, then the full OSA should be postponed to Release 2000.

The first point is needed for user data management in a multivendor environment. Current status makes it impossible for applications to access or modify the user data through the OSA API. Furthermore, current OSA stage 2 does not define how SCS accesses the user profile (e.g., SS settings, privacy settings).

The second point is needed to support different charging schemes, for all services, in OSA based solutions. Current OSA stage 2 does not support, e.g., SMS and GPRS on-line charging. Pre-paid subscriptions and messaging based services have been the latest growth areas in GSM networks. It can be expected that GPRS will follow the same path, based on experience from the Japanese packet data based services. OSA's inability to support prepaid in conjunction messaging and packet based services limits its usefulness.

The third point is needed to support registration of SCFs and dynamic Service Discovery in multivendor networks. Current OSA stage 2 does not support this. For example, it is not possible to know whether authentication has been performed nor which services should be offered.

In general, the API method descriptions leave a lot of room for different interpretations because they are so concise and broad.

Status of OSA stage 3

Stage 3 has been split into two parts, normative API description (TS 29.198) and an informative mapping description for MAP, CAP and WAP (TR 29.998). Also the basic mapping could be normative although it may depend on the situation in the SCS and CSE in particular service cases. The mapping does not currently go very deep into the data structures. Some parameter contents have been defined very vaguely, making multivendor implementations impossible.

In proprietary solutions it is possible to implement the SCF in many different ways. However, a well defined mapping, for example based on CAMEL, would be a good basis for multivendor implementations.

In addition to vague definitions, also several erroneous issues have been identified that require correction, postponing the completion till June 2000 which may also delay the OSA work in R00.

Miscellaneous

It is possible to convey the terminal capability to applications only through WAP, making WAP mandatory in such cases. It is also possible that the UAProf information is not available in the WAP Gateway or WAP Push Proxy from where it is supposed to be retrieved.

Conclusion

Recent OSA meetings have made significant progress in a very short time but nevertheless, lack of time has lead to the exclusion of essential capabilities and definitions from OSA. Moreover, in some areas the definitions have been left too vague for a reliable multivendor implementation. If such a specification is included in the 3GPP Release, it leads to incompatible proprietary implementations among the early adopters of the OSA specification. This would fragment the OSA market. Consequently, adding the missing functionalities and definitions in later Releases would become a tedious and time consuming exercise when manufacturers would be protecting their own implementations.

OSA has failed to meet the expectations for the specification quality and completeness, and the agreed deadline. There is still a fair amount of work to be done, destabilising Release 99 late into year 2000.

To guarantee a reliable and multivendor capable OSA in 3GPP specifications, it is suggested that OSA as a whole be postponed to Release 2000.