



Volunteers of America®

**Epok® Edition for Microsoft SharePoint**

“We were struggling with how to securely bring outside users into our SharePoint 2007 sites without corrupting our corporate Active Directory. Epok gave our enterprise a cost effective, scalable, easily managed extranet product for extending SharePoint 2007.”

Ron Nolte, IT Director  
Volunteers of America

**Key Business Benefits**

- Business users can now directly manage access for their business partners
- Lower IT cost of provisioning new users
- Commercial off the shelf solution

**Technology Environment**

- Microsoft SharePoint®
- Epok Edition for SharePoint
- Microsoft Windows® Server 2003
- SQL Server

**Volunteers of America (VOA) empowers business users to securely control extranet access to SharePoint 2007**

Volunteers of America is one the nation's largest and most comprehensive human services organizations, serving more than two million people each year, including at-risk youth, the frail elderly, men and women returning from prison, homeless individuals and families, people with disabilities, and those recovering from addictions.

Using Epok Edition for SharePoint 2007, VOA website owners have benefited from the ability to directly manage access to their sites. The site owner invites a client, volunteer or affiliate through a simple and familiar SharePoint web GUI interface. An email is generated to the invitee and an automated self-registration process begins. Once completed the person is granted access. This entire process as well as all subsequent access is logged and is available for later retrieval or audit. The process is done without IT involvement.

**The Challenge: Securely extending Microsoft SharePoint Extranet to volunteers, affiliates and clients**

VOA required a more cohesive website to expand national presence and facilitate volunteer and client registration with all of their thirty eight affiliate organizations.

VOA faced a significant challenge of implementing and managing an organizational model for user management and authentication as their affiliate members accessed different SharePoint 2007 websites.

There were several key requirements that the proposed system had to meet:

**Flexibility:** VOA needed to secure access to collaborative sites by associating these sites with individuals and groups within VOA and also with specific Affiliate communities external to VOA.

**Authentication:** VOA needed the ability to support multiple authentication schemes to the common set of site content, thereby allowing internal and extranet users access to the same underlying information. By allowing VOA associates and employees to use their existing authentication, continuity was ensured. At the same time, Epok enhanced Forms-based authentication allows extranet users to collaborate and share the same content securely. The Epok solution provided a seamless transition from one authentication mechanism to another. Epok's functional and easy-to-use administrative UI components made this complex task easy to deploy and support.

**Personalized content:** A key VOA requirement was in the area of personalized content. VOA wished to use SharePoint's MySites functionality to provide communications across

teams and projects and selectively expose subject area expertise to member affiliates and employee associates. While this feature generally worked well with Windows-authenticated internal user groups, it was not an easy task to extend this feature to Forms-based authenticated extranet users. However, with Epok's SharePoint solution and the built-in MySites support for either type of authentication mode, this task was accomplished quickly and with minimal IT support.

## Implementing an Epok Secure SharePoint Extranet

VOA deployed Epok's Federated Access Manager on a single Windows 2003 server and the Epok Edition for Microsoft SharePoint software on their existing MOSS 2007 server and Web Front End.

VOA initially experimented with several approaches to extend access to external affiliates, including a home-grown Forms-based Authentication application. While the design and architecture of their proposed solution were based on sound principles, the execution turned out to be more complex than anticipated and did not meet their expectations from the standpoint of features supported, the functionality exposed and overall realized performance.

## Protecting their Active Directory

Previously, external users would have had to be added to VOA's Active Directory. The problem was that by including these external users in the VOA's active directory there was a risk that they could inadvertently be granted access to private and sensitive information not meant for their eyes.

Today, with Epok Edition for Microsoft SharePoint, VOA site owners can rest assured that no external user could accidentally be granted access to the wrong information. Since all external users and groups are segregated in a separate user repository, there is no chance that they could gain access to other corporate information or applications.

Epok and VOA partnered to develop and implement a solution for VOA to create a customized national web presence and authentication model that would simplify access to affiliate information. The new system was designed to provide users with access to the VOA resources that they were permitted to work with while at the same time keeping the management of user accounts distributed across VOA headquarters and its affiliates. The new system architecture retains the highly scalable aspects of the original MOSS design, but simplifies user administration on the system.

## About Epok

Based in Bethesda, Maryland, Epok Inc. is a privately funded software company. Epok's federated access management software lets organizations securely extend application access across organizational boundaries — within and between enterprises. Business users partner with IT staff to control authorization rights, leading to improved extranet flexibility, lower cost of operations, and stronger compliance and security. Epok Federated Access Manager extends and increases the value of existing identity and access management systems, and through integrations with popular portals and web applications such as Microsoft SharePoint, Sun Java Portal Server and Documentum ECM end-users can easily discover and access the information they need. For more information, please visit [www.epok.net](http://www.epok.net).

## Key IT Benefits

- Business users can now directly manage access for their business partners
- Extranet users are now segregated from the AD improving security
- Delegated administration reduces provisioning costs for external users
- Full visibility of all access and its context facilitates compliance reporting
- Comfort level that critical data will be protected from unauthorized users

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