SWITCH

The Swiss Education & Research Network

RA Basic vs. RA Extended: which one to choose?

Kaspar Brand <brand@switch.ch>
2nd SWITCHpki RAO Meeting
Berne, 18 April 2007

RA Basic

Is the way to go when joining SWITCHpki as a new participant:

– allows you to start requesting [SCS] certificates as soon as the paperwork for the signup has been completed (for SwissSign certificates, takes a few additional days until a new entry is added to the predefined organization list)

– you will gradually become familiar with SWITCHpki and your RA duties

– is aimed at organizations requiring a few dozen certificates per year

– relieves you from having to archive the documents relating to a particular certificate request at your site (we don't mind if you do it anyway, though)

RA Basic (cont'd)

Doesn't prevent you from "upgrading" to RA Extended at a later stage

For SCS, allows completely paperless procedure (signed e-mail)

Still means *you* are responsible for checking the correctness of a certificate subject (domain names, e-mail addresses, OU attributes etc.) – the SWITCH RA operator will primarily check the request *for formal correctness* (i.e. is it signed by a person who has been appointed as an RA operator for this organization?)

RA Extended

Aimed at organizations requiring a large number of certificates per year (say, 50 or more), where going through the SWITCH RA would add unnecessary overhead

Reduces turnaround time when requesting a certificate (the organization's RA is completely autonomous)

Requires the organization to archive the documents relating to a particular request themselves

Will get the organizations RAOs direct access to the Web frontends of SWITCHpki's CA providers (GlobalSign, SwissSign), which use certificate-based authentication (meaning that you have to be familiar with user certificates)

Usually takes a few weeks to set up, training of all future RAOs (carried out by SWITCH) is mandatory

At a glance

RA Basic	RA Extended
best choice for new participants	usually attained by upgrading from RA Basic
organization doesn't have to archive request related documents	organization must have its own document archive
quick start possible	considerable time for training, setup etc. needed
lower (or no) yearly fee for small numbers of certificates	higher yearly fee, but with the advantage of having no additional per-cert costs (SCS only)

SWITCH

The Swiss Education & Research Network