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### Abstract

With a rapid growth of the Internet, exploring cost-effective and time-efficient methods for creating Internet services has become critical. As an emerging technology, service aggregation has been regarded as a promising candidate. However, it also raises serious issues on privacy management, as a service is usually provided by multiple providers that are usually transparent to its users. We observe that these issues have not been formally studied in the literature. In this paper, we propose a formal model for the privacy management in service aggregation and present a negotiation strategy on different privacy policies between two organizations.

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# A Framework for Privacy Policy Management in Service Aggregation

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**Abstract**—With a rapid growth of the Internet, exploring cost-effective and time-efficient methods for creating Internet services has become critical. As an emerging technology, *service aggregation* has been regarded as a promising candidate. However, it also raises serious issues on privacy management, as a service is usually provided by multiple providers that are usually transparent to its users. We observe that these issues have not been formally studied in the literature. In this paper, we propose a formal model for the privacy management in service aggregation and present a negotiation strategy on different privacy policies between two organizations.

**Keywords**—privacy policy; service aggregation.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The emergence of Service Oriented Architecture (SOA) and web service technologies is making the boundaries between network domains fade out. It is a trend for a business entity to combine the various services offered by various service providers in different domains along with some of its own services and resell the aggregated services to users. Service aggregation becomes a cost-effective and time-efficient way to develop new applications and services [5], [7]. Its benefit originates from the added value generated by the possible interactions and by the large scale rather than by the capabilities of its individual service provider separately. Clearly, this paradigm creates tremendous opportunities in e-businesses. However, its nature of cross-organisation raises serious challenges for privacy management. Because aggregating services implies the sharing of information between services, privacy protection must be considered. Businesses are often prohibited by law or by contract from disclosing the personal/private information of users/partners to third parties. To protect users' privacy, organizations require privacy policies. When a user accesses proprietary services provided by a single service provider, user's privacy is protected by the privacy policy of the provider. However, when a user's information needs to be shared by multiple service providers, which might have some inconsistent or even conflicting privacy policies, privacy protection obviously becomes a more challenging

problem. Therefore, advanced privacy management should be investigated. This includes the autonomous comparison of privacy policies, detection of inconsistency/conflicts, analysis of risks associated with the detected inconsistency/conflicts, and resolution of inconsistency/conflicts.

There are several useful tools for privacy policy management, such as XACML [10], P3P [12], APPEL [3], EPAL [4] and ASL [6]. These tools provide formal approaches for describing privacy policies. With novel functionalities, several privacy policy comparison and negotiation protocols are introduced [11], [2], [1], [14], [9], [8], [13]. However, these methods do not address the privacy management for service aggregation. In particular, they do not consider large privacy policy sets from multiple parties. In this paper, we address these issues by proposing a formal method for privacy policy management in service aggregation and a privacy policy negotiation method.

The remainder of the paper is organised as follows. In Section II the high-level architecture of service aggregation with privacy policies is demonstrated. Section III shows the basic components. The syntax and semantics are introduced in Section IV and V, respectively. Section VI gives several privacy policy matching protocols. Finally, Section VII concludes with future work.

## II. SERVICE AGGREGATION WITH PRIVACY POLICIES

Service aggregation is defined as logically combining the functionalities of multiple services as parts of a single, descriptive and meaningful information abstraction. In short, it is the combination of a set of services to achieve a common goal. Service aggregation allows users, service providers and a service aggregator to collaborate in highly distributed environments, and establish on-demand, short-term and dynamic business relationships for maximizing profitability. Each participant in service aggregation has its own privacy policy. A general diagram that illustrates the high-level architecture of service aggregation with privacy policies is shown in Figure 1.

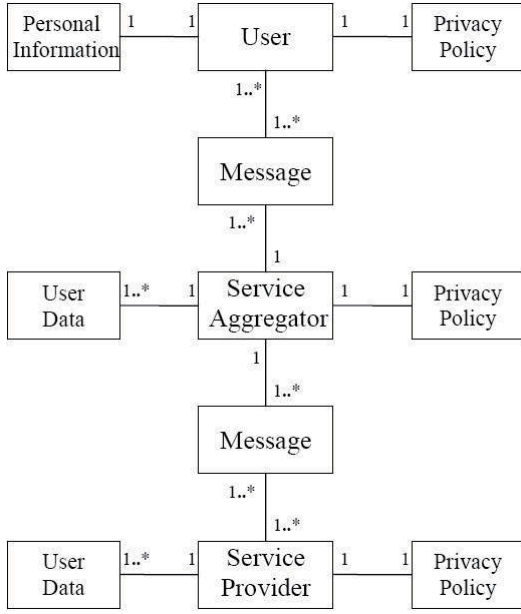


Fig. 1. High-level Architecture of Service Aggregation with Privacy Policies

As depicted in Figure 1, there are three types of parties in service aggregation: user, service providers and service aggregator. The service providers provide various public and professional services ranging from simple information retrieval services to more complex transaction oriented services, and the service aggregator works as an agency for service providers to aggregate various services offered by service providers along with some of its own services to serve users. Service aggregator and service providers have their associated privacy policies, and users have their own privacy policies (also called privacy preferences), too.

Privacy policy, as a special case of the authorization for controlling access to personal information, specifies under what conditions the personal information can be exchanged and what the information is used for. The privacy policies of service aggregator and service providers state what personal information it requires from a user and how the information will be used. The privacy policy of a user states what private information she is willing to share, with whom and under what circumstances it may be shared.

A privacy policy is attached to a software agent that acts for a user, a service aggregator or a service provider. Prior to the activation of a particular service, the agent for the user and the agent for the service aggregator will undergo a privacy policy exchange, in which the policies are examined for compatibility. The service is only activated if the policies are consistent. Similarly, when the service aggregator would integrate a service from a service provider who needs some personal information, the agent for the service aggregator and the agent for the service provider will also examine their privacy policies for compatibility. The services are aggregated only if the policies are not conflictive.

### III. BASIC COMPONENTS

Throughout the paper, we denote the set of natural numbers by  $\mathbb{N}$  and the set of numbers  $\{1, 2, \dots, n\}$  by  $[n]$ .

Our model relies on the following three basic components.

The first component is a set  $\mathcal{S} = \mathcal{U} \cup \mathcal{SA} \cup \mathcal{SP}$  of *subjects* that can operate an object actively. Subjects can be *users* (i.e., elements of  $\mathcal{U}$ ), or the *service aggregator* (the only element of  $\mathcal{SA}$ ), or *service providers* (i.e., elements of  $\mathcal{SP}$ ).

The second basic component is a set  $\mathcal{O} = \mathcal{D} \cup \mathcal{P} \cup \mathcal{M}$  of *objects*, which are the passive resources to be operated by subjects. Objects in our model include *data* (i.e., elements of  $\mathcal{D}$ ) of users, service aggregator and service providers, their *privacy policies* (i.e., elements of  $\mathcal{P}$ ), and *messages* (i.e., elements of  $\mathcal{M}$ ) that is associated with two subjects (a user and the service aggregator, or the service aggregator and a service provider).

The last basic component is a set  $\mathcal{OP}$  of *operators*, denoting the operations that subjects can execute on the objects in the system. Operators to be considered depend on the underlying activities in the system, usually include read, write, add, delete, create, revoke, send, receive, etc.

The basic components of our model are formalized by the notion of Service Aggregation as follows.

**Definition III.1 (Service Aggregation)** A Service Aggregation consists of the following components:

- 1) **Subjects.** A countable set  $\mathcal{S}$  of labels, called *subject identifiers*. This set is partitioned into three subsets, namely,  $\mathcal{U}$  (*users*),  $\mathcal{SA}$  (*service aggregator*) and  $\mathcal{SP}$  (*service providers*), where there is only one element in  $\mathcal{SA}$ . The service aggregator interacts with users and service providers, but users do not interact with service providers.
- 2) **Objects.** A countable set  $\mathcal{O}$  of labels, called *object identifiers*. This set is partitioned into three subsets, namely,  $\mathcal{D}$  (*data*),  $\mathcal{P}$  (*privacy policies*) and  $\mathcal{M}$  (*messages*).
- 3) **Operators.** A countable set  $\mathcal{OP}$  of labels, called *operator identifiers*.

### IV. SYNTAX OF SERVICE AGGREGATION

We assume that a service aggregation  $\mathcal{W}$  has been fixed. Over  $\mathcal{W}$ , a set of rules and vocabularies can be specified. In addition, we assume that the following sets are given:

- 1) A finite set  $\mathcal{C}$  of data categories with a fixed vocabulary, which are structured in hierarchies as follows.  $\mathcal{C}$  contains the special category  $sc$ , called *super category*. On  $sc$  the partial order relation  $\preceq$  is defined such that  $sc \preceq c$ , for all  $c \in \mathcal{C}$ . Given two categories  $c_i$  and  $c_j$ , if  $c_i \preceq c_j$  we say that  $c_j$  is a *subcategory* of  $c_i$ .
- 2) A finite set  $\mathcal{V}$  of context variables with a fixed domain.
- 3) A finite set  $\mathcal{D}$  of context data values with a fixed semantics.

**Definition IV.1 (Personal Information)** Personal information is a set  $PI$  of data about an individual.

Personal information can be partitioned into a set of data categories, such as contact information, financial information, medical data, demographic data, internet protocol information, cookie information, purchasing data, and others. Figure 2 gives an example of the hierarchy of Personal Information [6].

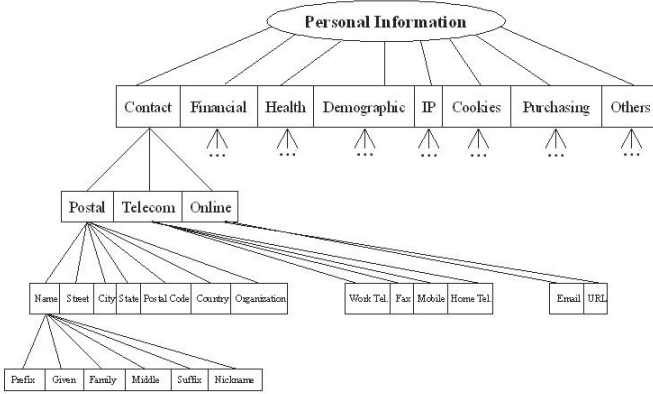


Fig. 2. Hierarchy of Personal Information

**Definition IV.2 (User Data)** User data includes some of personal information about a customer and some information that the system creates in the process of replying the customer's service request.

Usually user data about a customer contains not only the customer's personal information but also the services the customer requested and the corresponding service providers.

**Definition IV.3 (Message)** A message is a piece of information one subject sends to another subject.

**Definition IV.4 (Constraint)** A component is a pair  $com = (dv, val)$  of a variable  $dv$  and a set  $val$ , where  $dv \in \mathcal{V}$  and  $val \subseteq \mathcal{D} \wedge val \neq \emptyset$ .  $val$  is a set of values assigned to the variable  $dv$ . Given two components  $com_i = (dv_i, val_i)$  and  $com_j = (dv_j, val_j)$ ,  $com_i \subseteq com_j$  iff  $dv_i = dv_j \vee val_i \subseteq val_j$ .

A constraint is a finite set  $cstr_i = (com_{i_1}, com_{i_2}, \dots, com_{i_n})$  ( $n \in \mathbb{N}$ ) of components  $com_{i_j}$  ( $j \in [n]$ ). Given two constraints  $cstr_i = (com_{i_1}, com_{i_2}, \dots, com_{i_n})$  ( $n \in \mathbb{N}$ ) and  $cstr_j = (com_{j_1}, com_{j_2}, \dots, com_{j_m})$  ( $m \in \mathbb{N}$ ), if  $\forall com_{i_k}$  ( $k \in [n]$ ),  $\exists com_{j_l}$  ( $l \in [m]$ ), such that  $com_{i_k} \subseteq com_{j_l}$ , we say  $cstr_j$  is a subconstraint of  $cstr_i$ , or  $cstr_i$  is a supconstraint of  $cstr_j$ , denoted by  $cstr_i \preceq cstr_j$ .

**Definition IV.5 (Term)** A term is a reference  $t$  to a data category on specific pieces of personal information, where  $t \in \mathcal{C}$ .

**Definition IV.6 (Privacy Policy Vocabulary)** A privacy policy vocabulary is a pair  $PPVOC = (\mathcal{T}, CSTR)$  where  $\mathcal{T}$  and  $CSTR$  are a finite set of terms and a finite set of constraints, respectively.

**Definition IV.7 (Privacy Policy)** For a privacy policy vocabulary  $PPVOC$ , a privacy policy is a tuple  $Pol = \{(T_1, CSTR_1), (T_2, CSTR_2), \dots, (T_n, CSTR_n)\}$  ( $n \in \mathbb{N}$ ) of pairs  $(T_i, CSTR_i)$  ( $i \in [n]$ ) where  $T_i \in \mathcal{T}$  and  $CSTR_i \in CSTR$ , which defines what kinds of personal information  $\{T_i\}_{i=1, \dots, n}$  are exchanged between two subjects and how the personal information are used and stored under the corresponding constraints  $\{CSTR_i\}_{i=1, \dots, n}$ .

For privacy policies, usually there are following context variables: Recipient, Data, Purpose, Retention, Disclose-to, Consent, Obligation, Condition, Remedy, and Action. The first four variables are compulsory in a privacy policy, and others are optional. For the optional variables, different privacy policy languages define different parties of them. Notice that, as stated in [10], "Purpose" is the only variable that must exist in a privacy policy but not occur in a traditional access control policy. The notion of purpose plays a major role in protecting privacy, since privacy policies are concerned with the purposes that personal information is collected for rather than the actions that recipients perform on the personal information, and traditional access control policies cannot easily achieve privacy protection.

For a context variable, there are a lot of context values, which are different in different privacy policy language. For example, the values to the variable "Recipient" in P3P are "ours", "delivery", "same", "other-recipient", "unrelated", and "public".

**Example IV.1** Consider the privacy policy set by a subject  $s$  as follows.

$$\begin{aligned} Pol^s &= ((T_1^s, CSTR_1^s), (T_2^s, CSTR_2^s)) \\ &= ((T_1^s, (com_{1-1}^s, com_{1-2}^s)), (T_2^s, (com_{2-1}^s))) \\ &= ((T_1^s, ((dv_{1-1}^s, val_{1-1}^s), (dv_{1-2}^s, val_{1-2}^s))), \\ &\quad (T_2^s, (dv_{2-1}^s, val_{2-1}^s))) \end{aligned}$$

It states that, the privacy policy protects two categories of personal information,  $T_1^s$  and  $T_2^s$ . The constraint  $CSTR_1^s$  is for  $T_1^s$  and the constraint  $CSTR_2^s$  is for  $T_2^s$ . For the constraint  $CSTR_1^s$ , there are two variables,  $dv_{1-1}^s$  and  $dv_{1-2}^s$ , with the values,  $val_{1-1}^s$  and  $val_{1-2}^s$ , respectively, and for the constraint  $CSTR_2^s$ , there are one variable,  $dv_{2-1}^s$ , with the value,  $val_{2-1}^s$ . Now we assign "Home-Telephone-Number", "Purpose", "Recipient", "contact", "ours & delivery", "Credit-Card-Information", "Retention" and "no-retention" to  $T_1^s$ ,  $dv_{1-1}^s$ ,  $dv_{1-2}^s$ ,  $val_{1-1}^s$ ,  $val_{1-2}^s$ ,  $T_2^s$ ,  $dv_{2-1}^s$  and  $val_{2-1}^s$ , respectively, the detailed privacy policy is as follows.

$$\begin{aligned} Pol^s &= ((Home - Telephone - Number, \\ &\quad (Purpose, contact), \\ &\quad (Recipient, ours \& delivery)), \\ &\quad (Credit - Card - Information, \\ &\quad (Retention, no - retention))) \end{aligned}$$

This means, in order to contact the user,  $s$  collects a user's home telephone number. However, not only  $s$  knows the



telephone number, she will give the telephone number to the third party for delivery.  $s$  also requires the information of the user's credit card, but she will not keep the information any more after it is used for current business matter.

**Definition IV.8 (Service Aggregation Vocabulary)** A **service aggregation vocabulary** is a triple  $\mathcal{SAVOC} = (\mathcal{S}, \mathcal{O}, \mathcal{OP})$  where  $\mathcal{S}$  is a set of subjects including users, service aggregator and service providers,  $\mathcal{O}$  is a set of objects including personal information, privacy policies, user data and messages, and  $\mathcal{OP}$  is a set of operators.

## V. SEMANTICS OF SERVICE AGGREGATION

We point out that semantic aspects play a crucial role in our proposal, since they make the model innovative with respect to existing approaches. This matter will be deeply analyzed in this section. In this section, we provide the formal semantics of service aggregation.

**Definition V.1 (Request)** A **request** is a message that a subject sends to another subject to ask for some resource. For a privacy policy vocabulary  $\mathcal{PPVOC}$ , a **personal information (PI) request** is a request taking the form of a finite set  $req = ((t_1, cstr_1), \dots, (t_m, cstr_m))$  ( $m \in \mathbb{N}$ ) of pairs of term  $t_i$  and constraint  $cstr_i$  ( $i \in [m]$ ) to ask for some personal information.

**Definition V.2 (Matching Rule)** Given a PI request  $req = ((t_1, cstr_1), \dots, (t_m, cstr_m))$  ( $m \in \mathbb{N}$ ) and a privacy policy  $Pol = \{(T_1, CSTR_1), \dots, (T_n, CSTR_n)\}$  ( $n \in \mathbb{N}$ ), the request matches the privacy policy, denoted by  $req \sqsubset Pol$ , iff  $\forall (t_i, cstr_i) \in req$  ( $i \in [m]$ ),  $\exists (T_j, CSTR_j) \in Pol$  ( $j \in [n]$ ), such that  $T_j \preceq t_i \wedge CSTR_j \preceq cstr_i$ .

If a request matches a constraint, then it matches all subconstraints of the constraint. i.e., the match rules with positive results are additionally inherited up the hierarchies. If a request does not match the constraint (in all hierarchies), then it does not match all subconstraints of the constraint. i.e., the match rules with negative results are inherited down the hierarchies.

The set of privacy policies  $P$  is partially ordered by  $\preceq$ . The partial order is defined by a *cover* relationship. It models a *part – of* relation among privacy policies.

**Definition V.3 (Cover)** The **cover** relationship  $\preceq$  is defined as follows: a privacy policy  $Pol^y = \{(T_1^y, CSTR_1^y), \dots, (T_n^y, CSTR_n^y)\}$  covers another privacy policy  $Pol^x = \{(T_1^x, CSTR_1^x), \dots, (T_m^x, CSTR_m^x)\}$  ( $n, m \in \mathbb{N}$ ), denoted with  $Pol^y \preceq Pol^x$ , iff  $\forall (T_i^x, CSTR_i^x)$  ( $i \in [m]$ ),  $\exists (T_j^y, CSTR_j^y)$  ( $j \in [n]$ ), such that  $T_j^y \preceq T_i^x \wedge CSTR_j^y \preceq CSTR_i^x$ .

**Definition V.4 (Incomparable)** Given two privacy policies  $Pol^x$  and  $Pol^y$ , if neither  $Pol^x \preceq Pol^y$  nor  $Pol^y \preceq Pol^x$  holds, the two privacy policies are said to be **incomparable**.

**Definition V.5 (Formula)** For a service aggregation vocabulary  $\mathcal{SAVOC}$ , a **formula** is a construction of form:  $op(s_1, o) :: s_2$ , where  $s_1, s_2 \in \mathcal{S}$ ,  $o \in \mathcal{O}$ , and  $op \in \mathcal{OP}$ , which states that the subject  $s_1$  executes the operator  $op$  on object  $o$  and outputs the result to the subject  $s_2$ . If two subjects are the same one, the formula is denoted with  $op(s_1, o)$ . If there are more than one subject executing a operator on more than one object, all the subjects should be included in a pair of parentheses  $()$ , and so do all objects.

**Example V.1** A user  $u$  creates her personal information  $pi$ , the formula is  $create(c, pi)$ .

**Example V.2** The service aggregator  $sa$  uses its own information  $inf_{sa}$  to replace a user's personal information  $pi$ , the formula is  $replace(sa, (pi, inf_{sa}))$ .

**Example V.3** The service aggregator  $sa$  and a service provider  $sp$  negotiate on the personal information request  $req$  and the result of negotiation is send to the service provider  $sp$ , the formula is  $negotiate((sa, sp), req) :: sp$ .

**Definition V.6 (Conditional Formula)** A **conditional formula** is a formula with a condition. It takes the form:  $op(s_1, o) :: s_2 \leftarrow con(X)$ , which states that subject  $s_1$  executes the operation  $op$  on object  $o$  and outputs the result to the subject  $s_2$  when the condition  $con(X)$  is true, where the  $X$  can be a formula or matching rule. A condition is either a positive condition  $con(X)$  or a negative condition  $\neg con(X)$ . Two conditions are complementary if they are of the form  $con(X)$  and  $\neg con(X)$ .

**Example V.4** Let's consider the following conditional formula,

$$send(u, pi) :: sa \leftarrow con(req^{sa} \sqsubset Pol^u).$$

It states that, a user  $u$  sends her personal information  $pi$  to the service aggregator  $sa$  if the request of the service aggregator  $req^{sa}$  matches the privacy policy of the user  $Pol^u$ .

## VI. MATCHING PRIVACY POLICY

To make their services available to users, service providers have to register the services in the service aggregator. Different service may collect different personal information of users. For every service that would be registered, the service provider sends a PI request to the service aggregator. The service aggregator checks if the request matches its privacy policy. If the request does not match the privacy policy, the service aggregator will negotiate with the Service Provider on the unmatched part in the request. The strategy of negotiation is as follows.

Case 1: Service Aggregator  $sa$  does not collect the data  $data_{unmatch}$  in the unmatched part  $ump$ .

Rule 1.1 Service Aggregator  $sa$  asks Service Provider  $sp$  to remove the unmatched part  $ump$  from the request  $req^{sp}$ .

Rule 1.2  $sa$  may collect the data  $data_{unmatch}$  by negotiating with the user who needs the service.

Rule 1.3  $sa$  may replace the data  $data_{unmatch}$  with its own information  $inf_{sa}$  to reply  $sp$ .

Case 2: The constraints  $cstr_{unmatch}^{sp}$  on the data  $data_{unmatch}$  in the request  $req^{sp}$  are conflictive to the constraints in the privacy policy of Service Aggregator  $sa$ .

Rule 2.1 Service Aggregator  $sa$  asks Service Provider  $sp$  to change the constraints  $cstr_{unmatch}^{sp}$  to make the request  $req^{sp}$  match the privacy policy of  $sa$ .

Rule 2.2  $sa$  may replace the data  $data_{unmatch}$  with its own information  $inf_{sa}$  to reply.

We model the above rules as the following algorithm.

**Algorithm:**  $negotiate((sa, sp), ump)$

INPUT:  $sa, sp, ump$   
OUTPUT:  $TRUE$  if the negotiation is fail,  $FALSE$  otherwise.  
METHOD:

```

1:  if  $\neg con(collect(sa, data_{unmatch}))$  then
2:    if  $remove(sp, ump)$  then
3:      return  $TRUE$ 
4:    else if  $collect(sa, data_{unmatch})$  then
5:      return  $TRUE$ 
6:    else if  $replace(sa, (data_{unmatch}, inf_{sa}))$  then
7:      return  $TRUE$ 
8:    else return  $FALSE$ 
9:    endif
10:  endif
11: endif
12: else
13:  if  $change(sp, cstr_{unmatch}^{sp})$  then
14:    return  $TRUE$ 
15:  else if  $replace(sa, (data_{unmatch}, inf_{sa}))$  then
16:    return  $TRUE$ 
17:  else return  $FALSE$ 
18:  endif
19: endif
20: endif

```

Now we give the detailed procedure of matching privacy policies as follows.

- Step 1 Service Provider  $sp$  sends a PI request  $req^{sp}$  to Service Aggregator  $sa$ , who will check whether the request  $req^{sp}$  matches its privacy policy  $Pol^{sa}$  or not.
- Step 2 If  $req^{sp}$  does not match  $Pol^{sa}$ ,  $sa$  negotiates with  $sp$  on the unmatched part  $ump$ .
- step 3 If the result of negotiation is false, then  $sa$  rejects  $sp$  to register the service.
- Step 4 If  $req^{sp}$  matches  $Pol^{sa}$  or the result of negotiation is true,  $sa$  accepts  $sp$  as a legitimate service provider for the service.

It is modeled as follows.

#### Matching Protocol

- 1:  $send(sp, req^{sp}) :: sa$
- 2:  $negotiate((sa, sp), ump) \leftarrow \neg con(req^{sp} \sqsubset Pol^{sa})$
- 3:  $reject \leftarrow \neg con(negotiate((sa, sp), ump))$
- 4:  $accept \leftarrow con(negotiate((sa, sp), ump)) \cup con(req^{sa} \sqsubset Pol^{sa})$

When a service provider updates its privacy policy, if the old privacy policy can cover the new one, it is fine with the system. Otherwise, the service provider has to check if the change of privacy policy affects the original PI request for the registered service. If not, it is ok for the system. Otherwise, the matching protocol is excuted. If the output of the protocol is "reject", the registered service should be removed from the available service list of the service aggregator. Otherwise, it is retained.

When service aggregator updates its privacy policy, it also checks if the new privacy policy can cover the old one. If yes, no more action needs to be taken. Otherwise, the service aggregator will run the matching protocol for every registered service. The service aggregator will hold the service with the output "accept" of the protocol or remove the service from its available service list with the output "reject".

We omit the modelling of above two scenarios here.

## VII. CONCLUSIONS AND OPEN PROBLEM

In this paper, we proposed a logic model that naturally supports the encoding of complex privacy policy specifications in service aggregation. The syntax and semantics are both simple and intuitive. Based on them, we showed how to negotiate and match two privacy policies.

This paper represents our first attempt at a formal study of privacy policies in service aggregation. We plan to extend our semantics-centered approach to areas including privacy policy enforcement and privacy practice auditing.

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