

# About unique identifiers

A unique identifier is how your [domain or organisation](#) is identified to service providers when users access resources. They are either a numeric organisation ID or more usually a [scope](#) depending on the service provider.

Each domain will have a unique identifier and that is usually all that is needed - i.e. all subscription content is purchased for the whole domain.

Sometimes a domain is very large or widespread and has different resource needs for the organisations within it - e.g. sites in different countries. Where this is the case, the organisation can be set to have its own unique identifier and this allows the users under of that organisation to be seen by service providers as being represented by a different subscription. Specifically they will have their own organisation ID and scope - they will still use the same federation entityID as the domain.

Advantages of a unique identifier for an organisation

- Organisations can subscribe to different content using their own budgets
- Subscriptions can be less expensive when a smaller number of users can access

Disadvantages of a unique identifier for an organisation

- Content associated with the domain's identifier cannot be accessed by users under an organisation with its own identifier unless the service provider is able to associate multiple identifiers with an institutional or enterprise subscription.
- The costs for several small subscriptions to the same resource can add up to be more than one large subscription

If in any doubt, talk it over with your [account manager](#) or the service desk.

To set a sub-organisation as unique, open their account details, go to the permissions tab and tick *both* the unique identifier and unique scope boxes and save:

The screenshot shows the OpenAthens user interface for managing an account. The page title is 'athzzz > Modify account'. The breadcrumb trail is 'athzzz > Modify account'. The main navigation bar includes 'Accounts', 'Resources', 'Statistics', 'Preferences', and 'Management'. The account name is 'athdemo' (OpenAthens Demonstration Organisation), which is 'active'. It was created on 6 November 2013, modified on 26 February 2016 at 10:54, and expires on 6 May 2018. The parent organisation is 'Athens Team Accounts organisation'. The 'Organisation permissions' tab is selected, showing two checked options: 'Assign unique identifier to this organisation' (OpenAthens organisation ID: 67952128) and 'Assign unique scope to this organisation' (OpenAthens organisation scope: 67952128.eduserv.org.uk). Below these are fields for 'Username prefix' (ath) and 'Authorised addresses\*' (1-255.1-255.1-255.1-255). A note at the bottom of the address field states: 'Enter one value per line. Your current IP address is 188.92.143.3'. The 'Administration permissions' tab is also visible at the bottom.