Intermittent Session Disconnect in IdP v2.2

- Problem
- Cause
- Resolution
- Work Around (Obsolete: Issue Resolved.)

**Problem**

We have noticed an issue in Shibboleth IdP v2.2. It is affecting a small fraction of users and seem to be intermittent. Fewer than 10 users have reported this problem so far.

This bug was fixed on 9/9/2010.

**When does it occur?**

It is likely to occur when:

- User already has a SSO session and visits a second resource/application in the same browser window.
- Sticky session cookie is not passed by the browser.
- SSO/Authn request is handled by a different IdP node.

We have sticky session enabled in our load balancer so that user's browser traffic (for authentication) is always handled by the same IdP node. Load balancer saves a sticky session cookie in the browser. Once SSO session is established, if user visits a second resource/application, user is redirected back to IdP to verify the SSO session. If the browser does not pass the sticky session cookie, load balancer may route the request to a second IdP node and the above error may occur.

When this error occurs IdP displays System Error page, but error description is empty.

**Cause**

We have determined that the error was caused by subtle configuration errors in the Terracotta caching engine. Terracotta is used by Shibboleth 2.x to replicate sessions across load balanced instances.

**Resolution**

We corrected the configuration error in the production environment on 9/9/2010.

**Work Around (Obsolete: Issue Resolved.)**

Advise the user to try the following.

1. Retry i.e. revisit the resource/application.
2. Clear cookie cache and revisit the resource/application.
3. Open a new browser and revisit the resource/application.