

Permission vs authorization

Guido Boella

Dipartimento di
Informatica

Università di Torino
guido@di.unito.it

Leendert van der Torre

CWI Amsterdam

and TU Delft

e-mail: torre@cwi.nl

Research question

- Is “**permission**” the same as “**authorization**” in the following sentences?

1. you are **permitted** to read this document
2. you are **authorized** to read this document

(in **other contexts** they are **not** synonymous: e.g., authorization as institutional empowerment formalised by Jones and Sergot)

Please raise your hand if “yes”

- Is “**permission**” the same as “**authorization**” in these sentences?
 1. you are permitted to read this document
 2. you are authorized to read this document

In computer security

- In **policies** for the **security of computer systems** “permission” is considered the **same** as “authorization” (and also of “right”...).
- So the context is permission or authorization to “**access a resource**”.

Are they synonyms or aren't they?

- It depends:
 1. If there is only **one normative system** they **are the same**.
 2. If there are **multiple** normative systems coordinated by a **global policy**, they **are not** the same:
e.g., virtual organizations, virtual enterprises, Grid architecture, EU...

The difference is

- Permission as **exception** to obligations (icail03).
- Obligations based on **sanctions** (kr04).
- Sanctions require **powers and control** on the **resources** on which the obligations is posed.
- Thus, **giving obligation or permission** requires **power and control of a resource**.
- **No need of authorization** if a single normative system owns all resources.

Authorization

- To allow **distributed management of policies** in distributed systems we distinguish permission from authorization.
- The entity who manages the global policy **can be delegated the power to give authorization** to users.
- It has up to date knowledge of the system, etc.

Is authorization enough?

- How can an **authorization** to a user can have **effect** on the owner of a resource?
- It is **not enough** that the owner of a resource **delegates** the power to authorize.
- It is necessary that it gives a **permission** which is **conditional** on the **authorization**
- Hence, authorization **presupposes** permission

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