XACML v3.0 Related and Nested Entities
Profile Version 1.0

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- urn:oasis:names:tc:xacml:3.0:core:schema:wd-17
Abstract:
It is not unusual for access control policy to be dependent on attributes that are not naturally properties of the access subject or resource, but rather are properties of entities that are related to the access subject or resource. This profile defines the means to reference such attributes from within XACML policies for processing by a policy decision point.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

{Non-normative}

The eXtensible Access Control Markup Language (XACML) [XACML3] defines categories of attributes that describe entities of relevance to access control decisions. XACML rules, policies and policy sets contain assertions over the attributes of these entities that must be evaluated to arrive at an access decision. Principal among the various predefined entities are the entity that is requesting access, i.e., the access subject, and the entity being accessed, i.e., the resource. However, it is not unusual for access decisions to be dependent on attributes of entities that are associated with the access subject or resource. For example, attributes of an organization that employs the access subject, or attributes of a licensing agreement that covers the terms of use of a resource.

This profile defines two ways of representing these associated entities in the request context - related entities and nested entities - and defines additional mechanisms to access and traverse these entities.

Nested entities are represented by a new data-type (the entity data-type) which carries all the attributes of the entity as its value. A nested entity appears in the request context as a sub-element of the containing entity.

\[
\text{access-subject}
\]

| subject-id | j.smith@acme.example.com |
| relationship | 
| relationship-kind | employee |
| organization-name | Acme Inc. |
| relationship-kind | customer |
| organization-name | Acmeville Building Society |

![Figure 1 - An access-subject with nested entities](image)

The entity data-type also provides a way for XACML to represent and process values of structured data that does not depend on using XML documents and XPath expressions.

Related entities appear alongside the predefined entities in the request context and have the same structure. The Category XML attribute [XML] of a related entity holds a distinct, system-defined URI that may be used in XACML attribute values to refer to the related entity from another entity.
This profile defines the attribute-designator and the attribute-selector functions (function variants of the 
<AttributeDesignator> and <AttributeSelector> elements in XACML 3.0) to enable the 
extraction of attributes from nested entities and related entities. A policy author does not need any 
knowledge of a related entity's URI in order to extract attributes from it using these functions.

This profile also defines quantified expressions, which are a generalization of the higher-order bag 
functions of XACML 3.0 for manipulating bags of values without the need for an explicit looping construct. 
By declaring an explicit quantified variable, the quantified expressions may be nested without 
ambiguity. The quantified expressions allow non-trivial expressions to be applied to the members of a 
bag, including members that are associated entities.

1.2 Glossary

Domain
The domain of discourse of a quantified variable, which is the set of values a quantified 
variable is allowed to take during the evaluation of a quantified expression. The domain is 
represented by a bag of values.

Entity
A collection of XACML attributes and/or XML content describing the properties of a thing that 
exists, though possibly in a conceptual rather than physical sense. A person, organization, 
device, database record, employment contract, agreement or regulation are each an example of an entity. The predefined attribute categories of XACML such as access subject, resource and 
action are also examples of entities.

Entity data-type
An XACML data-type for representing entities as attribute values.

Iterant expression
An XACML expression to be separately evaluated for each value of a quantified variable.

Nested entity
An entity that appears as a value of an attribute of another entity.

Quantified expression
An XACML expression that nominates a quantified variable, a domain and an iterant 
expression. A quantified expression is evaluated by combining the results of evaluating the
**iterant expression** multiple times, each time binding the **quantified variable** to a different value from the **domain**.

**Quantified variable**
A variable that ranges over the values in a **domain** and is bound to those values by a **quantified expression**.

**Related entity**
An **entity** in the request context that is separate from every other **entity** and is referenced by a URI.

### 1.3 Terminology
The key words “MUST”, “MUST NOT”, “REQUIRED”, “SHALL”, “SHALL NOT”, “SHOULD”, “SHOULD NOT”, “RECOMMENDED”, “MAY”, and “OPTIONAL” in this document are to be interpreted as described in [RFC2119].

XML Schema [XSD1][XSD2] fragments in this specification are non-normative and assume the following two namespace declarations:

- `xmlns:xsi="http://www.w3.org/2001/XMLSchema"
- `xmlns:xacml="urn:oasis:names:tc:xacml:3.0:core:schema:wd-17"

The replacement text for the XML entity reference “&xacml;” used in examples is “urn:oasis:names:tc:xacml:”.

### 1.4 Normative References


1.5 Non-Normative References


2 Background

{Non-normative}

There are a number of approaches for dealing with entities associated with the access subject, resource or other predefined entities.

An obvious approach is to define additional categories for these associated entities. However, this becomes problematic when there can be more than one instance of a particular kind of entity. For example, if the access subject is employed by more than one organization. Sufficient additional organization categories must be defined to accommodate the maximum possible number of associated organizations (e.g., organization-1, organization-2, ..., organization-n), but each additional organization category increases the complexity of XACML policies since the policy writer must account for the worst case, making the same assertions over each organization category.

Another solution is to have the policy enforcement point (PEP) or policy information point (PIP) make the attributes of associated entities appear as attributes of the access subject or resource in a process referred to as “flattening”. Flattening of associated entities is adequate in simple cases where the access subject or resource has a relationship with at most one instance of each kind of associated entity (for example, the access subject can be employed by only one organization), or where the associations between attribute values originating from the same associated entity are not important (for example, if it is not necessary to know whether a particular organization employing the access subject is both not-for-profit and registered in a particular country).

Where it is necessary to apply some test over attributes of the same associated entity, one possible approach is to have the PEP or PIP generate a derived attribute that holds the result of an expression evaluated over the attributes of an associated entity (for example, a Boolean attribute of the access subject whose value indicates whether the access subject is employed by a not-for-profit organization registered in the USA). The disadvantage of this approach is that part of the access control logic resides in the implementation or configuration of the PEP or PIP (instead of in XACML policies) where it is not readily visible to policy writers, not easily changed by policy writers and not easily transportable to other XACML deployments.

This profile offers a different approach that avoids the drawbacks of the preceding solutions. It establishes conventions for representing associated entities and the links between them and defines the means to evaluate XACML expressions over the attributes of associated entities that are discovered at the time of policy evaluation.
3 Nested and Related Entities

Two representations of associated entities are defined by this profile: related entities and nested entities.

Related entities are separate entities in the request context that are identified by arbitrary URIs [RFC3986] using their Category XML attribute. These URIs are system defined, distinct from the predefined category URIs and not necessarily known to policy writers. An entity MAY reference a related entity through an XACML attribute value of the http://www.w3.org/2001/XMLSchema#anyURI data-type that holds the URI of the related entity. This profile places no restrictions on the form of the URI except that it MUST be unique to each related entity in the request context and references must be consistent. The order of related entities in the request context carries no significance.

A nested entity has the same composition as a related entity except that it lacks a Category or Id XML attribute and appears as a value of an attribute of another entity using the entity data-type defined in Section 4.

Nested entities are suited to cases where entities are associated hierarchically. Related entities are suited to cases where there are multiple kinds of reference between the same pair of entities or where the chains of references can form cycles or link the access subject to the resource (such cases can be handled by nesting, but not without duplication of entities in the request context). There is no prohibition on using related entities for some kinds of entities and nesting for the remaining entities.
4 The Entity Data-type

The entity data-type is used to represent an entity nested within another entity. It is identified by the URI urn:oasis:names:tc:xacml:3.0:data-type:entity. The entity data-type MAY be used in places where XACML [XACML3] requires a primitive data-type. In particular, this means that it is possible to have a bag of entities.

The valid XML representation for a value of this data-type is an optional <Content> child element followed by zero or more <Attribute> child elements.

XACML attribute values in the XML representation are validated according to the AttributeValueType XML Schema type. An XML Schema type definition for the content of a value of the entity data-type would not be used and is therefore not required. However, to aid understanding, the content of an <AttributeValue> element for a value of the entity data-type would be expected to conform to the following EntityType XML Schema type:

```xml
<xs:complexType name="EntityType">
  <xs:sequence>
    <xs:element ref="xacml:Content" minOccurs="0"/>
    <xs:element ref="xacml:Attribute" minOccurs="0" maxOccurs="unbounded"/>
  </xs:sequence>
</xs:complexType>
```

The JSON representation [RFC4627] of an attribute value of the entity data-type follows the representation of a Category object [XACMLJSON] except that name/value pairs for “Category” and “Id” SHALL NOT appear.

The JSON shorthand type code [XACMLJSON] for the entity data-type is “entity”. This data-type MUST always be explicitly given in the JSON representation; it cannot be inferred from an attribute value.

The result of successfully evaluating the XPath expression [XPath] in the Path XML attribute of an <AttributeSelector> element [XACML3] is a node-set that is to be converted to a bag of XACML attribute values of the data-type nominated by the DataType XML attribute of the <AttributeSelector> element. The conversion to values of the entity data-type is defined here. If any node in the node-set is not an element node, then the attribute selector SHALL return “Indeterminate” with the status code urn:oasis:names:tc:xacml:1.0:status:syntax-error; otherwise, an attribute value of the entity data-type SHALL be generated for each node in the node-set. In terms of the XML representation, each such attribute value SHALL have a <Content> child element and SHALL NOT have any <Attribute> child elements. The child element of the <Content> element SHALL be a copy of the element corresponding to the node, along with its entire content, plus whatever namespace declarations from ancestor elements as are required to define namespace prefixes used in the content. Namespace declarations from ancestor elements that are not visibly used in the content MAY be added.

In terms of the JSON representation, each value SHALL have a “Content” name/value pair and SHALL NOT have an “Attribute” name/value pair. The value of the “Content” name/value pair SHALL be the Base64 encoding or escaped XML string representation (see [XACMLJSON]) of the child XML element of the <Content> element that would be constructed for the XML representation.

4.1 Examples of Entity Values

{Non-normative}

Figure 3 shows an attribute value of the entity data-type in both XML and JSON. This value also contains a nested entity.

XML:
<Attribute xmlns="urn:oasis:names:tc:xacml:3.0:core:schema:wd-17"
    IncludeInResult="false"
    AttributeId="urn:example:xacml:attribute:relationship">
    <AttributeValue DataType="urn:oasis:names:tc:xacml:3.0:data-type:entity">
        <Attribute IncludeInResult="false"
            AttributeId="urn:example:xacml:attribute:relationship-kind">
            <AttributeValue DataType="http://www.w3.org/2001/XMLSchema#string">
                employee
            </AttributeValue>
        </Attribute>
        <Attribute IncludeInResult="false"
            AttributeId="urn:example:xacml:attribute:start-date">
            <AttributeValue DataType="http://www.w3.org/2001/XMLSchema#date">
                2013-09-01
            </AttributeValue>
        </Attribute>
        <Attribute IncludeInResult="false"
            AttributeId="urn:example:xacml:attribute:organization">
            <AttributeValue DataType="urn:oasis:names:tc:xacml:3.0:data-type:entity">
                <Attribute IncludeInResult="false"
                    AttributeId="urn:example:xacml:attribute:organization-name">
                    <AttributeValue DataType="http://www.w3.org/2001/XMLSchema#string">
                        Acme Inc.
                    </AttributeValue>
                </Attribute>
                <Attribute IncludeInResult="false"
                    AttributeId="urn:example:xacml:attribute:organization-type">
                    <AttributeValue DataType="http://www.w3.org/2001/XMLSchema#string">
                        commercial
                    </AttributeValue>
                </Attribute>
            </AttributeValue>
        </Attribute>
    </AttributeValue>
</Attribute>

JSON:

```json
{
    "AttributId": "urn:example:xacml:attribute:relationship",
    "DataType": "entity",
    "Value": {
        "Attribute": [{
            "AttributeId": "urn:example:xacml:attribute:relationship-kind",
            "DataType": "string",
            "Value": "employee"
        },
        {
            "AttributeId": "urn:example:xacml:attribute:start-date",
            "DataType": "date",
            "Value": "2013-09-01"
        },
        {
            "AttributeId": "urn:example:xacml:attribute:organization",
            "DataType": "entity",
            "Value": {
                "Attribute": [{
                    "AttributeId": "urn:example:xacml:attribute:organization-name",
                    "DataType": "string",
                    "Value": "Acme Inc."
                },
                {
                    "AttributeId": "urn:example:xacml:attribute:organization-type",
                    "DataType": "string",
                    "Value": "commercial"
                }]
            }
        }
    }
}
```
Figure 3 - An entity in XML and JSON

Figure 4 also shows an attribute value of the entity data-type in both its XML representation and its equivalent JSON representation. It captures similar information to Figure 3 using a <Content> element.

XML:

```xml
<Attribute xmlns="urn:oasis:names:tc:xacml:3.0:core:schema:wd-17"
    IncludeInResult="false"
    AttributeId="urn:example:xacml:attribute:relationship">
    <AttributeValue DataType="urn:oasis:names:tc:xacml:3.0:data-type:entity">
        <Content>
            <ex:Relationship xmlns:ex="urn:example:xacml:ns:relationship">
                <ex:RelationshipKind>employee</ex:RelationshipKind>
                <ex:StartDate>2013-09-01</ex:StartDate>
                <ex:Organization>
                    <ex:OrganizationName>Acme Inc.</ex:OrganizationName>
                    <ex:OrganizationType>commercial</ex:OrganizationType>
                </ex:Organization>
            </ex:Relationship>
        </Content>
    </AttributeValue>
</Attribute>
```

JSON:

```json
{
    "AttributeId": "urn:example:xacml:attribute:relationship",
    "DataType": "entity",
    "Value": {
        "Content": "<?xml version="1.0"?>
<ex:Relationship xmlns:ex="urn:example:xacml:ns:relationship">
    <ex:RelationshipKind>employee</ex:RelationshipKind>
    <ex:StartDate>2013-09-01</ex:StartDate>
    <ex:Organization>
        <ex:OrganizationName>Acme Inc.</ex:OrganizationName>
        <ex:OrganizationType>commercial</ex:OrganizationType>
    </ex:Organization>
</ex:Relationship>"
    }
}
```

Figure 4 - An entity with XML content
5 Quantified Expressions

There are some common requirements for the quantified expressions defined in this profile.

The quantified expressions are additional elements in the substitution group of the `<Expression>` element and all have the same XML Schema type: `QuantifiedExpressionType`.

```
<xs:complexType name="QuantifiedExpressionType">
  <xs:complexContent>
    <xs:extension base="xacml:ExpressionType">
      <xs:sequence>
        <xs:element ref="xacml:Expression"/>
        <xs:element ref="xacml:Expression"/>
      </xs:sequence>
      <xs:attribute name="VariableId" type="xs:string" use="required"/>
    </xs:extension>
  </xs:complexContent>
</xs:complexType>
```

The first child expression is called the **domain** and the second child expression is called the **iterant expression**. The `VariableId` XML attribute names the quantified variable that will be used by the quantified expression. The quantified variable does not have a corresponding `<VariableDefinition>`. The **domain** SHALL be an expression that evaluates to a bag of values of the same data-type, or “Indeterminate” in the case of an error. The bag MAY be empty. The **iterant expression** SHALL be an expression that evaluates to a single value (for all but one kind of quantified expression the data-type of that value is `http://www.w3.org/2001/XMLSchema#boolean`).

A quantified expression SHALL NOT use the same `VariableId` as a `<VariableDefinition>` of the enclosing `<Policy>` element. Quantified expressions MAY be nested in either or both of the domain and the iterant expression. A nested quantified expression SHALL NOT use the same `VariableId` as an enclosing quantified expression.

The evaluation of a quantified expression begins with the evaluation of the domain expression. The iterant expression is then evaluated once for each value from the domain with the quantified variable set to that value, except that evaluation of the quantified expression may terminate before considering all the values from the domain if the final result of the quantified expression has already been determined. The conditions for early termination are specified for each kind of quantified expression. The effect of the result of the iterant expression on the overall result of the quantified expression depends on the kind of quantified expression. Bags of values are unordered so there is no constraint on the order in which an implementation chooses to consider values from the domain.

The value of the quantified variable, i.e., the particular value from the domain, MAY be referenced one or more times from within the iterant expression using a `<VariableReference>` element. It is not an error if the quantified variable is not referenced at all. The quantified variable SHALL NOT be referenced from within the domain of the quantified expression to which it belongs. A quantified variable MAY be referenced from within the domain of another quantified expression nested within the iterant expression.

5.1 ForAny Expression

The ForAny quantified expression tests whether any value of a bag satisfies an iterant expression. It is represented by the `<ForAny>` element, which is of the `QuantifiedExpressionType` complex type.

```
<xs:element name="ForAny" type="xacml:QuantifiedExpressionType" substitutionGroup="xacml:Expression"/>
```
The **iterant expression** of a ForAny expression SHALL be an expression that evaluates to a value of the http://www.w3.org/2001/XMLSchema#boolean data-type.

The result of a ForAny expression SHALL be a value of data-type http://www.w3.org/2001/XMLSchema#boolean or "Indeterminate".

The ForAny expression evaluates to "true" if the **iterant expression** evaluates to "true" for any value from the *domain*; otherwise, the expression evaluates to "Indeterminate" if the **iterant expression** evaluates to "Indeterminate" for any value from the *domain*; otherwise, the expression evaluates to "false". Note that the ForAny expression evaluates to "false" if the *domain* is an empty bag. Evaluation of the expression MAY terminate whenever the **iterant expression** evaluates to "true".

### 5.2 ForAll Expression

The ForAll **quantified expression** tests whether all values of a bag satisfy an **iterant expression**. It is represented by the `<ForAll>` element, which is of the QuantifiedExpressionType complex type.

```xml
<xs:element name="ForAll" type="xacml:QuantifiedExpressionType"
            substitutionGroup="xacml:Expression"/>
```

The **iterant expression** of a ForAll expression SHALL be an expression that evaluates to a value of the http://www.w3.org/2001/XMLSchema#boolean data-type.

The result of a ForAll expression SHALL be a value of data-type http://www.w3.org/2001/XMLSchema#boolean or "Indeterminate".

The ForAll expression evaluates to "false" if the **iterant expression** evaluates to "false" for any value from the *domain*; otherwise, the expression evaluates to "Indeterminate" if the **iterant expression** evaluates to "Indeterminate" for any value from the *domain*; otherwise, the expression evaluates to "true". Note that the ForAll expression evaluates to "true" if the *domain* is an empty bag. Evaluation of the expression MAY terminate whenever the **iterant expression** evaluates to "false".

### 5.3 Map Expression

The Map **quantified expression** converts a bag of values to another bag of values. It is represented by the `<Map>` element, which is of the QuantifiedExpressionType complex type.

```xml
<xs:element name="Map" type="xacml:QuantifiedExpressionType"
            substitutionGroup="xacml:Expression"/>
```

The **iterant expression** of a Map expression SHALL be an expression that evaluates to a single value (not necessarily of the same data-type as the values in the *domain*).

The result of the Map expression SHALL be a bag of values of the same data-type as the **iterant expression** or "Indeterminate".

If the **iterant expression** evaluates to "Indeterminate" for any value from the *domain*, then the result of the Map expression is "Indeterminate"; otherwise, the result bag contains the values resulting from the evaluation of the **iterant expression** for each value from the *domain*. The Map expression evaluates to an empty bag if the *domain* is an empty bag. Evaluation of the Map expression MAY terminate whenever the **iterant expression** evaluates to "false".

### 5.4 Select Expression

The Select **quantified expression** returns a bag containing the values from the *domain* that satisfy the **iterant expression**. That is, the result is a subset of, or equal to, the *domain*. The Select expression is represented by the `<Select>` element, which is of the QuantifiedExpressionType complex type.
The *iterant expression* of a Select expression SHALL be an expression that evaluates to a value of the http://www.w3.org/2001/XMLSchema#boolean data-type.

The result of a Select expression SHALL be a bag of values of the same data-type as the values from the *domain* or “Indeterminate”.

If the *iterant expression* evaluates to “Indeterminate” for any value from the *domain*, then the result of the Select expression is “Indeterminate”; otherwise, the result bag contains each value from the *domain* for which the *iterant expression* evaluates to “true”. The Select expression evaluates to an empty bag if the *domain* is an empty bag. Evaluation of the Select expression MAY terminate whenever the *iterant expression* evaluates to “Indeterminate”.

```xml
<xs:element name="Select" type="xacml:QuantifiedExpressionType"
    substitutionGroup="xacml:Expression"/>
```
6 Functions

6.1 The attribute-designator function

The attribute-designator function produces a bag of attributes values from an entity that is either in the request context or provided as an argument. It is identified by the URI urn:oasis:names:tc:xacml:3.0:function:attribute-designator. When the entity is in the request context, this function emulates the <AttributeDesignator> element.

This function SHALL take three to five arguments. If any argument evaluates to “Indeterminate”, then the function evaluates to “Indeterminate”.

The data-type of the first argument to this function SHALL be either http://www.w3.org/2001/XMLSchema#anyURI or the entity data-type. If the data-type is http://www.w3.org/2001/XMLSchema#anyURI, then the value of the argument specifies the value of the Category XML attribute of the entity in the request context from which the XACML attribute values will be retrieved. The value of the first argument MUST match the value of the Category XML attribute according to identifier equality [XACML3]. If the data-type is the entity data-type, then the XACML attribute values SHALL be retrieved from the value of the first argument.

The second argument to this function SHALL be of data-type http://www.w3.org/2001/XMLSchema#anyURI. The value of the argument specifies the value of the AttributeId XML Attribute of the XACML attributes of the entity from which the XACML attribute values will be retrieved. The value of the second argument MUST match the value of the AttributeId XML attribute according to identifier equality.

The third argument SHALL be of data-type http://www.w3.org/2001/XMLSchema#anyURI. The value of the argument specifies the value of the DataType XML attribute of the XACML attribute values returned by the function. The value of the third argument MUST match the value of the DataType XML attribute according to identifier equality.

The fourth argument, if present, SHALL be of data-type http://www.w3.org/2001/XMLSchema#boolean. If the fourth argument is omitted, then it defaults to the value “false”. The value of this argument governs (in the same manner as the value of the MustBePresent XML attribute of the <AttributeDesignator> element) whether the function returns “Indeterminate” or an empty bag in the event that there are no matching attribute values to be returned.

The fifth argument, if present, SHALL be of data-type http://www.w3.org/2001/XMLSchema#string. If the fifth argument is present, then the function MUST only return attribute values of XACML attributes with an Issuer XML Attribute that matches the value of the fifth argument. The value of the fifth argument MUST match the value of the Issuer XML attribute according to the urn:oasis:names:tc:xacml:1.0:function:string-equal function. If the fifth argument is absent, then all matching attribute values of the specified XACML attributes are returned without regard to the Issuer XML attribute.

6.1.1 Example

{Non-normative}

The two outer expressions in Figure 5 have the same effect.

```xml
<AttributeDesignator xmlns="urn:oasis:names:tc:xacml:3.0:core:schema:wd-17"
  Category="urn:oasis:names:tc:xacml:3.0:attribute-category:resource"
  AttributeId="urn:oasis:names:tc:xacml:1.0:resource:resource-id"
  DataType="http://www.w3.org/2001/XMLSchema#string"
  MustBePresent="false"/>

<Apply xmlns="urn:oasis:names:tc:xacml:3.0:core:schema:wd-17"
  FunctionId="urn:oasis:names:tc:xacml:3.0:function:attribute-designator">
```
6.2 The attribute-selector function

The attribute-selector function produces a bag of unnamed and uncategorized attribute values from the <Content> element of an entity that is either in the request context or provided as an argument. It is identified by the URI urn:oasis:names:tc:xacml:3.0:attribute-selector. When the entity is in the request context, this function emulates the <AttributeSelector> element.

This function SHALL take three to five arguments. If any argument evaluates to “Indeterminate”, then the function evaluates to “Indeterminate”.

The data-type of the first argument to this function SHALL be either http://www.w3.org/2001/XMLSchema#anyURI or the entity data-type. If the data-type is http://www.w3.org/2001/XMLSchema#anyURI, then the value of the argument specifies the Category XML attribute of the entity in the request context that contains the <Content> element. The value of the first argument MUST match the value of the Category XML attribute according to identifier equality [XACML3]. If the data-type is the entity data-type, then the <Content> element of the first argument SHALL be used.

The second argument SHALL be of data-type urn:oasis:names:tc:xacml:3.0:attribute-type. The XPathCategory XML attribute of the value of this argument SHALL be ignored. The value contains the XPath expression to be evaluated against the <Content> element specified by the first argument.

The third argument SHALL be of data-type http://www.w3.org/2001/XMLSchema#anyURI. The value of the argument specifies the data-type of the attribute values returned from the evaluation of this function.

The fourth argument, if present, SHALL be of data-type http://www.w3.org/2001/XMLSchema#boolean. If the fourth argument is omitted, then it defaults to the value “false”. The value of this argument governs (in the same manner as the value of the MustBePresent XML attribute of the <AttributeSelector> element) whether the function returns “Indeterminate” or an empty bag in the event that the first argument specifies an entity in the request context that does not exist, the specified entity does not have a <Content> element, or the XPath expression from the second argument selects an empty node-set.

The fifth argument, if present, SHALL be of data-type http://www.w3.org/2001/XMLSchema#anyURI. The value of this argument specifies the AttributeId of an XACML attribute in the entity specified by the first argument. The referenced attribute MUST have a single value of data-type urn:oasis:names:tc:xacml:3.0:attribute-type and the XPath expression represented by that value MUST select a single node in the <Content> element. The XPathCategory XML attribute of the value SHALL be ignored. The fifth argument corresponds to the ContextSelectorId XML attribute of the <AttributeSelector> element.

Unlike the <AttributeSelector> element, the attribute-selector function accepts XPath expressions that evaluate to a Boolean, string or number. If the XPath expression given by the second argument evaluates to a Boolean, then the data-type in the third argument MUST be http://www.w3.org/2001/XMLSchema#boolean. If the XPath expression evaluates to a string, then the data-type in the third argument MUST be http://www.w3.org/2001/XMLSchema#string.

![Equivalence of attribute designators](image-url)
XPath expression evaluates to a number, then the data-type in the third argument MUST be http://www.w3.org/2001/XMLSchema#double.

The attribute-selector function is evaluated according to the following processing model, or any model that produces identical results.

1. Construct an XML data structure suitable for XPath processing from the <Content> element of the entity specified by the first argument. If the entity is not found or does not have a <Content> element, then the return value is either “Indeterminate” or an empty bag as determined by the fourth argument; otherwise, the data structure shall be constructed so that the document node of this structure contains a single document element which corresponds to the single child element of the <Content> element. The constructed data structure shall be equivalent to one that would result from parsing a stand-alone XML document consisting of the contents of the <Content> element (including any comment and processing-instruction markup).

2. Select a context node for xpath processing from this data structure. If the fifth argument is present, then the context node shall be the node selected by applying the XPath expression given in the fifth argument. It shall be an error if this evaluation returns no node or more than one node, in which case the return value MUST be “Indeterminate” with status code urn:oasis:names:tc:xacml:1.0:status:syntax-error. If the fifth argument is absent, then the context node shall be the document node of the data structure.

3. Evaluate the XPath expression given in the second argument using the context node selected in the previous step.

4. If the result of step 3 is a Boolean, string or number, then convert the result to a value of the data-type specified by the third argument using, respectively, the xs:boolean(), xs:string() or xs:double() constructor function from Section 5 of [XF]; otherwise (a node-set), convert the string value of each node in the result of step 3 into an XACML attribute value of the data-type specified by the third argument using the appropriate constructor function from Section 5 of [XF], or as described in Section 4 in the case of the entity data-type. The relevant constructor functions are:

   - xs:string()
   - xs:boolean()
   - xs:integer()
   - xs:double()
   - xs:dateTime()
   - xs:date()
   - xs:time()
   - xs:hexBinary()
   - xs:base64Binary()
   - xs:anyURI()
   - xs:yearMonthDuration()
   - xs:dayTimeDuration()

   If an error occurs when converting the values returned by step 3, then the result of the function MUST be "Indeterminate" with status code urn:oasis:names:tc:xacml:1.0:status:processing-error.

   If the result of step 3 is an empty node-set, then the return value is either “Indeterminate” or an empty bag as determined by the fourth argument.

6.3 The entity-one-and-only function

The urn:oasis:names:tc:xacml:3.0:function:entity-one-and-only function SHALL take a bag of values of the entity data-type as its only argument. If the bag contains exactly one value, then the function returns that value; otherwise, the function evaluates to “Indeterminate.”
6.4 The entity-bag-size function

The urn:oasis:names:tc:xacml:3.0:function:entity-bag-size function SHALL take a bag of values of the entity data-type as its only argument and SHALL return an http://www.w3.org/2001/XMLSchema#integer value indicating the number of values in the bag.

6.5 The entity-bag function

The urn:oasis:names:tc:xacml:3.0:function:entity-bag function SHALL take any number of arguments of the entity data-type and return a bag containing the values of those arguments. An application of this function to zero arguments SHALL produce an empty bag of the entity data-type.
7 Examples

{Non-normative}

7.1 Matching Values in a Bag

The XACML higher-order bag functions allow individual values in a bag to be operated upon, but only with pre-existing XACML functions. The **quantified expressions** are a generalization of the higher-order bag functions that permit arbitrarily complex expressions to be applied to the individual values of a bag.

As an example, suppose that resources have a multi-valued integer product-code attribute and the goal is to write an expression that is true if and only if at least one of the product-code values is in the range 100 to 200. A naive solution might look like the expression in Figure 6.

```xml
<Apply FunctionId="&xacml;1.0:function:and"
xmlns="&xacml;3.0:core:schema:wd-17">
  <Apply FunctionId="&xacml;1.0:function:any-of">
    <Function FunctionId="&xacml;1.0:function:integer-greater-than-or-equal"/>
    <AttributeDesignator Category="&xacml;3.0:attribute-category:resource"
AttributeId="urn:example:xacml:product-code"
DataType="http://www.w3.org/2001/XMLSchema#integer"
MustBePresent="false">
      <AttributeValue DataType="http://www.w3.org/2001/XMLSchema#integer">100</AttributeValue>
    </AttributeDesignator>
  </Apply>
  <Apply FunctionId="&xacml;1.0:function:any-of">
    <Function FunctionId="&xacml;1.0:function:integer-less-than-or-equal"/>
    <AttributeDesignator Category="&xacml;3.0:attribute-category:resource"
AttributeId="urn:example:xacml:product-code"
DataType="http://www.w3.org/2001/XMLSchema#integer"
MustBePresent="false">
      <AttributeValue DataType="http://www.w3.org/2001/XMLSchema#integer">200</AttributeValue>
    </AttributeDesignator>
  </Apply>
</Apply>
```

*Figure 6 - Range test using higher-order bag functions*

However, this doesn't work as desired. Suppose that a particular resource has the product-code values 50 and 250. The expression would evaluate to “true” for this resource, though it doesn't have a product-code value between 100 and 200, because there is no correlation between the value that satisfies the first argument of the and function and the value that satisfies the second argument of the and function. In this case, both arguments are satisfied, but by different values.

Using the ForAny expression it is possible to write an XACML expression that evaluates to “true” if and only if the product-code attribute has at least one value in the range 100 to 200, as in Figure 7.

```xml
<ForAny VariableId="product-code" xmlns="&xacml;3.0:core:schema:wd-17">
  <AttributeDesignator Category="&xacml;3.0:attribute-category:resource"
AttributeId="urn:example:xacml:product-code"
DataType="http://www.w3.org/2001/XMLSchema#integer"
MustBePresent="false">
    <Apply FunctionId="&xacml;1.0:function:and">
      <Apply FunctionId="&xacml;1.0:function:integer-greater-than-or-equal">
        <AttributeValue DataType="http://www.w3.org/2001/XMLSchema#integer">100</AttributeValue>
      </Apply>
      <Apply FunctionId="&xacml;1.0:function:integer-less-than-or-equal">
        <AttributeValue DataType="http://www.w3.org/2001/XMLSchema#integer">200</AttributeValue>
      </Apply>
    </Apply>
  </AttributeDesignator>
</ForAny>
```

*xacml-3.0-related-entities-v1.0-cs02*

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Figure 7 - Range test using a quantified expression

The attribute designator beginning at line [26] extracts a bag of integer values from the product-code attribute. This bag becomes the domain of the ForAny expression beginning at line [25]. The ForAny expression binds each of these integer values to the product-code quantified variable in turn as it evaluates its iterant expression (lines [31] to [42]). The iterant expression evaluates to “true” if the value bound to the product-code quantified variable is both greater than or equal to 100, and less than or equal to 200. The overall expression evaluates to “true” if the iterant expression evaluates to “true” for at least one value of the quantified variable.

7.2 Access Subject Relationships

The example application in this section involves the relationships an access subject has with various organizations. Each relationship is represented by a relationship entity, which has the following single-valued attributes:

- urn:example:xacml:relationship-kind
  A string value indicating the kind of relationship the access subject has with an organization. Typical values include “employee”, “contractor”, “volunteer” and “customer”.

- urn:example:xacml:start-date
  The date on which the relationship described by the entity commenced or will commence. The relationship entity is expected to be removed when the relationship terminates.

- urn:example:xacml:organization
  A URI value referencing the organization entity for the relationship.

The relationship entities are nested in the urn:example:xacml:attribute:relationship attribute of the access-subject category.

Each organization is represented by an organization entity, which has the following attributes, among others:

- urn:example:xacml:organization-name
  The name of the organization.

- urn:example:xacml:organization-type
  A string value indicating the type of organization. Typical values include “commercial”, “non-profit” and “educational”.

The organization entities are related entities in the request context.

Figure 8 is an example of a request context making use of the relationship and organization entities.
<AttributeValue DataType="&xacml;1.0:data-type:rfc822Name">
  j.smith@acme.example.com</AttributeValue>
</Attribute>

<Attribute AttributeId="urn:example:xacml:attribute:relationship">
  <AttributeValue DataType="&xacml;3.0:data-type:entity">
    <Attribute AttributeId="urn:example:xacml:attribute:relationship-kind">
      employee</AttributeValue>
    </Attribute>
    <Attribute AttributeId="urn:example:xacml:attribute:start-date">
      2013-09-01</AttributeValue>
  </AttributeValue>
</Attribute>

<Attribute AttributeId="urn:example:xacml:attribute:organization">
  <AttributeValue DataType="http://www.w3.org/2001/XMLSchema#anyURI">
    urn:uuid:af993222-cb04-436f-a296-bbd4624e218d</AttributeValue>
</Attribute>

<AttributeValue DataType="&xacml;3.0:data-type:entity">
  <Attribute AttributeId="urn:example:xacml:attribute:relationship-kind">
    customer</AttributeValue>
  <Attribute AttributeId="urn:example:xacml:attribute:start-date">
    2010-03-12</AttributeValue>
</Attribute>

<Attribute AttributeId="urn:example:xacml:attribute:organization">
  <AttributeValue DataType="http://www.w3.org/2001/XMLSchema#anyURI">
    urn:uuid:f182fc03-1b2b-4401-8c3d-a94675bf537e</AttributeValue>
</Attribute>

<Attributes xmlns="&xacml;3.0:core:schema:wd-17"
Category="urn:uuid:af993222-cb04-436f-a296-bbd4624e218d">
  <Attribute AttributeId="urn:example:xacml:attribute:organization-name">
    Acme Inc.</AttributeValue>
</Attribute>

<Attribute AttributeId="urn:example:xacml:attribute:organization-type">
  commercial</AttributeValue>
</Attributes>

<Attributes xmlns="&xacml;3.0:core:schema:wd-17"
Category="urn:uuid:f182fc03-1b2b-4401-8c3d-a94675bf537e">
  <Attribute AttributeId="urn:example:xacml:attribute:organization-name">
    Acmeville Building Society</AttributeValue>
</Attribute>

<Attribute AttributeId="urn:example:xacml:attribute:organization-type">
  commercial</AttributeValue>
</Attributes>
The expression in Figure 9 evaluates to "true" if and only if the access subject is a current employee of at least one non-profit organization (which is not satisfied given the preceding request context).
The attribute designator beginning at line [02] generates a bag containing all the relationship entities of the access subject, which are nested in the relationship attribute of the access-subject category. This bag becomes the domain of the ForAny expression beginning at line [01]. The ForAny expression binds each of these entity values to the relationship quantified variable in turn as it evaluates its iternat expression (lines [07] to [65]).

The iternat expression is an and function with three arguments. The first argument (lines [8] to [22]) tests whether the relationship-kind attribute of the entity value currently bound to the relationship quantified variable has the string value “employee”. The first argument to the attribute-designator function beginning at line [10] is a reference to the relationship quantified variable, which resolves to a value of the entity data-type, so the attribute-designator function obtains the relationship attribute from this value.

The second argument of the and function (lines [23] to [42]) tests whether the current date is greater than or equal to the value of the start-date attribute of the currently bound entity value.

The third argument of the and function (lines [43] to [64]) tests whether the currently bound relationship entity refers to an organization related entity with “non-profit” as the value of its organization-type attribute. The attribute-designator function beginning at line [49] obtains the URI value of the organization attribute of the entity value currently bound to the relationship quantified variable. This URI becomes the value of the first argument to the attribute-designator function beginning at line [47], which attempts to find a related entity in the request context with a Category XML attribute matching this URI. If such an entity exists, then the organization-type attribute is obtained from it by the attribute-designator function.

7.3 Table-driven Policy Expression

XACML policies are sometimes used to enforce externally imposed rules or regulations. Such policies tend to display a recurring pattern where each rule or regulation is assessed against the attributes in an authorization request. As an alternative, the entity data-type can be used to represent entries in a table of rules or regulations and quantified expressions can be used to factor out the common pattern and apply it once for each entry in the table. The result is generally a policy that is more compact, easier to maintain and less error-prone because the pattern is only written once and the table entries are simple collections of XACML attributes. Changes to the rules or regulations are easily accommodated by changing attribute values in the table rather than rewriting XACML expressions. This approach is also useful in the case where policies are distributed from a central authority but need to be customized for each receiver. The customizations can be in a table managed by the receiver.

The examples in this section involve testing whether a particular type of product can be exported to a particular destination country using a table of approved exports. In Section 7.3.1 the table of approved exports is represented with XACML attributes in entity values. The examples in Section 7.3.2 show the table of approved exports represented in XML and also demonstrate the use of the attribute-selector.
function. Since the table of approved exports is common to all requests it is held in an attribute in the environment category and would typically be fetched from a PIP by the context handler when required.

### 7.3.1 Table-driven Policy Expression Using XACML Attributes

The table of approved exports as a whole is held in the multi-valued attribute `urn:example:xacml:attribute:approved-export` in the environment category. Each entry in the table of approved exports is represented by an `entity` value with the following multi-valued attributes:

- `urn:example:xacml:attribute:ae-product-type`
  The string names of product-types approved for export.
- `urn:example:xacml:attribute:ae-destination`
  The approved destination countries for the associated product-types. Each destination is represented by a two-character country code.

Figure 10 shows a short example of a table of approved exports.

```xml
<Attribute xmlns="&xacml;3.0:core:schema:wd-17" IncludeInResult="false"
    AttributeId="urn:example:xacml:attribute:approved-export">
    <AttributeValue DataType="&xacml;3.0:data-type:entity">
        <Attribute IncludeInResult="false"
            AttributeId="urn:example:xacml:attribute:ae-product-type">
            <AttributeValue DataType="http://www.w3.org/2001/XMLSchema#string"/>
            left-handed discombobulator</AttributeValue>
        </Attribute>
        <AttributeValue DataType="http://www.w3.org/2001/XMLSchema#string">
            US</AttributeValue>
    </AttributeValue>
    <AttributeValue DataType="http://www.w3.org/2001/XMLSchema#string">
        DE</AttributeValue>
    </AttributeValue>
    <AttributeValue DataType="http://www.w3.org/2001/XMLSchema#string">
        AU</AttributeValue>
</Attribute>
</AttributeValue>
<Attribute xmlns="&xacml;3.0:core:schema:wd-17" IncludeInResult="false"
    AttributeId="urn:example:xacml:attribute:approved-export">
    <AttributeValue DataType="&xacml;3.0:data-type:entity">
        <Attribute IncludeInResult="false"
            AttributeId="urn:example:xacml:attribute:ae-product-type">
            <AttributeValue DataType="http://www.w3.org/2001/XMLSchema#string"/>
            left-handed combobulator</AttributeValue>
        </Attribute>
        <AttributeValue DataType="http://www.w3.org/2001/XMLSchema#string">
            GB</AttributeValue>
    </AttributeValue>
</Attribute>
</AttributeValue>
</Attribute>
```

*Figure 10 - The table of approved exports as an attribute*

The expression in Figure 11 evaluates to “true” if and only if the product type specified by the `product-type` attribute in the resource category is approved for export to the destination specified by the `destination` attribute in the action category according to the table of approved exports.
The attribute designator beginning at line [02] generates an entity bag containing the two attribute values of the approved-export attribute from the environment category. This bag becomes the domain of the ForAny expression beginning at line [01]. The ForAny expression binds each of these entity values to the approved-export quantified variable in turn as it evaluates the iterant expression (lines [07] to [40]). The attribute-designator function beginning at line [16] extracts the values of the ae-product-type attribute from the entity value currently bound to the approved-export quantified variable, returning them as a bag of “string” values to be compared with the value of the product-type attribute from the resource category by the string-is-in function on line [08]. The attribute-designator function beginning at line [32] extracts the values of the ae-destination attribute from the entity value currently bound to the approved-export quantified variable, returning them as a bag of “string” values to be compared with the value of the destination attribute from the action category by the string-is-in function on line [24].

Since there are two values in the domain, the iterant expression will be evaluated at most twice (noting that the ForAny expression can stop as soon as it finds a value of the quantified variable for which the iterant expression evaluates to “true”). For one of these evaluations, the attribute-designator beginning

---

Figure 11 - Testing if export is approved

The attribute designator beginning at line [02] generates an entity bag containing the two attribute values of the approved-export attribute from the environment category. This bag becomes the domain of the ForAny expression beginning at line [01]. The ForAny expression binds each of these entity values to the approved-export quantified variable in turn as it evaluates the iterant expression (lines [07] to [40]). The attribute-designator function beginning at line [16] extracts the values of the ae-product-type attribute from the entity value currently bound to the approved-export quantified variable, returning them as a bag of “string” values to be compared with the value of the product-type attribute from the resource category by the string-is-in function on line [08]. The attribute-designator function beginning at line [32] extracts the values of the ae-destination attribute from the entity value currently bound to the approved-export quantified variable, returning them as a bag of “string” values to be compared with the value of the destination attribute from the action category by the string-is-in function on line [24].

Since there are two values in the domain, the iterant expression will be evaluated at most twice (noting that the ForAny expression can stop as soon as it finds a value of the quantified variable for which the iterant expression evaluates to “true”). For one of these evaluations, the attribute-designator beginning
at line [16] will return a bag containing the string value “right-handed discombobulator” and the attribute-designator function beginning at line [32] will return a bag containing the string values “US”, “DE” and “FR”. For the other evaluation of the iterant expression, the attribute-designator beginning at line [16] will return a bag containing the string values “left-handed discombobulator” and “left-handed combobulator” and the attribute-designator function beginning at line [32] will return a bag containing the string values “AU” and “GB”.

Representing the table of approved exports as an environment attribute allows for it to be maintained in, or generated from, an external data source and fetched on demand by a PIP. As an environment attribute it is also available for use by any rule, policy or policy set. If the table of approved exports is not externally maintained and is only used within one XACML policy, then the table could alternatively be represented as a variable definition of that policy, with the domain of the ForAny expression replaced with a reference to that variable. If the table is only used within the domain of one quantified expression, then the domain could be that table directly.

The expression in Figure 11 expects an authorization request to contain exactly one value for the product-type attribute and exactly one value for the destination attribute (see the string-one-and-only functions on lines [09] and [25]). The expression in Figure 12 is a reformulation of the expression in Figure 11 that allows a request to contain multiple values for the product-type and/or multiple values for the destination. This expression evaluates to “true” if and only if every product-type in the request is approved for export to every destination in the request.

---

[42] <ForAll VariableId="product-type" xmlns="&xacml;3.0:core:schema:wd-17">
[43]   <AttributeDesignator Category="&xacml;3.0:attribute-category:resource"
[44]     AttributeId="urn:example:xacml:attribute:product-type"
[45]     DataType="http://www.w3.org/2001/XMLSchema#string"
[46]     MustBePresent="false">
[47]     <ForAll VariableId="destination">
[48]       <AttributeDesignator Category="&xacml;3.0:attribute-category:action"
[49]         AttributeId="urn:example:xacml:attribute:destination"
[50]         DataType="http://www.w3.org/2001/XMLSchema#string"
[51]         MustBePresent="false">
[52]         <ForAny VariableId="approved-export">
[53]           <AttributeDesignator Category="&xacml;3.0:attribute-category:environment"
[54]             AttributeId="urn:example:xacml:attribute:approved-export"
[55]             DataType="&xacml;3.0:core:schema:wd-type:entity"
[56]             MustBePresent="false"/>
[57]           <Apply FunctionId="&xacml;1.0:function:and">
[58]             <Apply FunctionId="&xacml;1.0:function:string-is-in">
[59]               <VariableReference VariableId="product-type"/>
[60]             </Apply>
[61]             <Apply FunctionId="&xacml;1.0:function:attribute-designator">
[62]               <VariableReference VariableId="approved-export"/>
[63]             </Apply>
[64]             <Apply FunctionId="&xacml;1.0:function:attribute-designator">
[65]               <VariableReference VariableId="approved-export"/>
[66]             </Apply>
[67]             <AttributeValueDataType="http://www.w3.org/2001/XMLSchema#anyURI"
[68]               >urn:example:xacml:attribute:ae-product-type</AttributeValue>
[69]             <AttributeValueDataType="http://www.w3.org/2001/XMLSchema#anyURI"/>
[70]               >http://www.w3.org/2001/XMLSchema#string</AttributeValue>
[71]           </Apply>
[72]         </Apply>
[73]       </Apply>
[74]     </ForAll>
[75]   </AttributeDesignator>
[76] </ForAll>
The ForAll expression beginning at line [42] has the `product-type` attribute from the `resource` category as its `domain`. Thus it binds each value of that attribute to its `product-type quantified variable` as it evaluates its `iterant expression` (lines [48] to [87]). The ForAll expression beginning at line [48] has the `destination` attribute from the `action` category as its `domain`. Thus it binds each value of that attribute to its `destination quantified variable` as it evaluates its `iterant expression` (lines [54] to [86]). Between them the two ForAll expressions consider every combination of `product-type` and `destination` in the request. The ForAny expression beginning at line [54] determines whether the current values bound to the `product-type` and `destination` quantified variables match at least one of the `entity` values from the approved-export environment attribute. The overall expression evaluates to “true” if the ForAny expression evaluates to “true” for every combination of `product-type` and `destination`.

### 7.3.2 Table-driven Policy Expression Using XML

The example in this section addresses the same application as the previous section except that the table of approved exports is instead represented as XML in the `<Content>` element of a single `entity` value of the `urn:example:xacml:attribute:approved-exports` attribute in the `environment` category as shown in Figure 13.

```xml
[01] <Attribute xmlns="&xacml;3.0:core:schema:wd-17" IncludeInResult="false"
[02]   AttributeId="urn:example:xacml:attribute:approved-exports">
[03]   <AttributeValue DataType="&xacml;3.0:data-type:entity">
[04]     <Content>
[05]       <ae:ApprovedExports xmlns:ae="urn:example:approved-export">
[06]         <ae:ProductType>right-handed discombobulator</ae:ProductType>
[07]         <ae:Destination>US</ae:Destination>
[08]         <ae:Destination>DE</ae:Destination>
[09]         <ae:Destination>FR</ae:Destination>
[10]        </ae:ApprovedExport>
[12]          <ae:ProductType>left-handed discombobulator</ae:ProductType>
[13]          <ae:Destination>GB</ae:Destination>
[14]        </ae:ApprovedExport>
[15]        <ae:ApprovedExport>
[16]          <ae:ProductType>left-handed combobulator</ae:ProductType>
[17]          <ae:Destination>AU</ae:Destination>
[18]        </ae:ApprovedExport>
[19]       </Content>
[20]    </AttributeValue>
[21]  </Attribute>
```

Figure 13 - The table of approved exports as XML

In this case, the expression to test whether a particular `product type` can be exported to a particular `destination country` makes use of the attribute-selector function instead of the attribute-designator function, as shown in Figure 14.

```xml
[81]   <ae:ApprovedExports xmlns:ae="urn:example:approved-export">
[82]      <ae:ProductType>right-handed discombobulator</ae:ProductType>
[83]      <ae:Destination>US</ae:Destination>
[84]      <ae:Destination>DE</ae:Destination>
[85]      <ae:Destination>FR</ae:Destination>
[86]      <ae:ApprovedExport>
[87]         <ae:ProductType>left-handed discombobulator</ae:ProductType>
[88]         <ae:Destination>GB</ae:Destination>
[89]      </ae:ApprovedExport>
[90]     </ae:ApprovedExports>
[91]   </Content>
[92] </Attribute>
```

Figure 12 - Testing if export is approved for multiple products and destinations
<ForAny VariableId="approved-export">
    xmlns="&xacml;3.0:core:schema:wd-17"
    xmlns:ae="urn:example:approved-export">
    <Apply FunctionId="&xacml;3.0:function:attribute-selector">
        <Apply FunctionId="&xacml;3.0:function:entity-one-and-only">
            <AttributeDesignator
                Category="&xacml;3.0:attribute-category:environment"
                AttributeId="urn:example:xacml:attribute:approved-exports"
                DataType="&xacml;3.0:datatype:entity"
                MustBePresent="false">
                <AttributeValue DataType="&xacml;3.0:data-type:xpathExpression" XPathCategory="urn:example:xacml:category:ignored">
                    ./ae:ApprovedExport<AttributeValue>
                </AttributeValue>
            </AttributeDesignator>
        </Apply>
    </Apply>
    <Apply FunctionId="&xacml;1.0:function:and">
        <Apply FunctionId="&xacml;1.0:function:string-is-in">
            <AttributeDesignator
                Category="&xacml;3.0:attribute-category:resource"
                AttributeId="urn:example:xacml:attribute:product-type"
                DataType="http://www.w3.org/2001/XMLSchema#string"
                MustBePresent="false">
                <AttributeValue DataType="&xacml;3.0:attribute:xpathExpression" XPathCategory="urn:example:xacml:category:ignored">
                    ./ae:ProductType<AttributeValue>
                </AttributeValue>
            </AttributeDesignator>
        </Apply>
    </Apply>
    <Apply FunctionId="&xacml;1.0:function:and">
        <Apply FunctionId="&xacml;1.0:function:string-is-in">
            <AttributeDesignator
                Category="&xacml;3.0:attribute-category:action"
                AttributeId="urn:example:xacml:attribute:destination"
                DataType="http://www.w3.org/2001/XMLSchema#string"
                MustBePresent="false">
                <AttributeValue DataType="&xacml;3.0:attribute:xpathExpression" XPathCategory="urn:example:xacml:category:ignored">
                    ./ae:Destination<AttributeValue>
                </AttributeValue>
            </AttributeDesignator>
        </Apply>
    </Apply>
    <Apply FunctionId="&xacml;3.0:function:attribute-selector">
        <VariableReference VariableId="approved-export"/>
        <AttributeValue
            DataType="&xacml;3.0:datatype:entity"
            XPathCategory="urn:example:xacml:category:ignored">
                http://www.w3.org/2001/XMLSchema#anyURI
                &http://www.w3.org/2001/XMLSchema#anyURI
            </AttributeValue>
        </Apply>
    </Apply>
</ForAny>

Figure 14 - Testing if export is approved using the attribute-selector function
The attribute designator beginning at line [27] extracts the **nested entity** (line [03] to line [20]) from the approved-exports attribute, which becomes the first argument to the attribute-selector function beginning at line [25]. This attribute-selector function generates an **entity** bag containing the two <ApprovedExport> child elements as separate **entity** values, as illustrated in Figure 15.

```
<Apply FunctionId="&xacml;3.0:function:entity-bag">
  <AttributeValue DataType="&xacml;3.0:data-type:entity">
    <Content>
      <ae:ApprovedExport xmlns:ae="urn:example:approved-export">
        <ae:ProductType>right-handed discombobulator</ae:ProductType>
        <ae:Destination>US</ae:Destination>
        <ae:Destination>DE</ae:Destination>
        <ae:Destination>FR</ae:Destination>
      </ae:ApprovedExport>
    </Content>
  </AttributeValue>
  <AttributeValue DataType="&xacml;3.0:data-type:entity">
    <Content>
      <ae:ApprovedExport xmlns:ae="urn:example:approved-export">
        <ae:ProductType>left-handed discombobulator</ae:ProductType>
        <ae:ProductType>left-handed combobulator</ae:ProductType>
        <ae:Destination>AU</ae:Destination>
        <ae:Destination>GB</ae:Destination>
      </ae:ApprovedExport>
    </Content>
  </AttributeValue>
</Apply>
```

*Figure 15 - The table of approved exports as an entity bag*

The ForAny expression beginning at line [22] binds each of these **entity** values to the approved-export **quantified variable** in turn as it evaluates the **iterant expression** (lines [40] to [77]). The attribute-selector function beginning at line [49] extracts the values of the <ProductType> child elements from the **entity** currently bound to the approved-export **quantified variable**, returning them as a bag of “string” values to be compared with the value of the product-type attribute from the request context. The attribute-selector function beginning at line [67] extracts the values of the <Destination> child elements from the **entity** currently bound to the approved-export **quantified variable**, returning them as a bag of “string” values to be compared with the value of the destination attribute from the request context.
8 Security Considerations

*Entities* may contain sensitive information that must be protected from unauthorized disclosure. A policy writer interacting with a policy administration point (PAP) would not normally see any *entities* known to the PIP or PEP, but there are ways a policy writer could manipulate policies in order to discover the values of *entity* attributes.

The most direct method is to use attribute assignment expressions in obligations and advice [XACML3]. Attribute assignment expressions provide a means to return information from the request context to the PEP. This attack requires the existence of an obligation or advice that presents the extracted attribute values in a form that is accessible to the policy writer. For example, an obligation that can be co-opted to send an email to the policy writer, display an on-screen message in an application that the policy writer uses or print a message in a log file that the policy writer can read. The policy writer adds such an obligation or advice to a policy that is under the writer's control. The policy writer can then cause the targeted information to be extracted by instigating an access attempt for which the policy is applicable, or by just waiting until such an access attempt occurs in the course of normal operations.

A more indirect method of exposing *entity* attributes is to change a target or condition in a policy under the control of the policy writer so that an authorization decision is dependent on the value of an *entity* attribute the policy writer is attempting to discover. Using relational functions (*type-less-than, type-equal and type-greater-than*) and a binary search, the policy writer can home in on the actual value of the *entity* attribute by iteratively editing the condition and observing the effect on the authorization decision.

These methods are available using only the core capabilities of XACML, however, the attribute-designator function defined in this profile allows access to *entities* that might not otherwise be accessible through the request context.

If a policy writer is a highly privileged user with access to the *entity* data stores underlying the PIP and PEP, then the fact that the policy writer can obtain information about *entities* by other means is not an issue. However, there are two ways a less-privileged user can inject a malicious policy.

The `<XACMLAuthzDecisionQuery>` element [SAML] allows an XACML client to include additional policies to be used by the PDP in evaluating the authorization request. A malicious client (or a client that has been compromised by a malicious user) could provide a policy that is designed to discover *entity* attributes.

The Administration and Delegation Profile [ADMIN] defines a mechanism for the delegation of policy administration. A delegate can create arbitrary policies, but the applicability of those policies is limited in scope by administrative policies created by trusted policy writers. However, the procedure for establishing the authority of a delegate's policy does not take into consideration the obligations and advice in the policy. There is no verification of the obligations and advice and therefore no restriction on the attribute assignment expressions the delegate uses. The procedure also does not restrict which functions or attributes the delegate can use in a policy. The delegate could create a policy that is applicable within the delegated scope, but is designed to discover *entity* attributes.

To protect *entity* attributes from unauthorized disclosure, implementers might consider the following strategies:

- **Disallow policies and policy sets in `<XACMLAuthzDecisionQuery>` elements.**
- **Only accept policies and policy sets in `<XACMLAuthzDecisionQuery>` elements provided by authenticated, trusted clients.**
- **Disallow the attribute-designator function in policies and policy sets provided in `<XACMLAuthzDecisionQuery>` elements.** Note that this still leaves the contents of the predefined *entities* such as the access subject and resource open to discovery.
- **Apply access controls to the *entity* attributes accessed by policies and policy sets in `<XACMLAuthzDecisionQuery>` elements, or otherwise limit the *entities* and *entity* attributes that these policies and policy sets can access.**

With respect to delegation, implementers might consider the following mitigation strategies:
• Disable or not implement the capabilities of the Administration and Delegation Profile.

• Disallow the attribute-designator function in policies and policy sets written by delegates. Note that this still leaves the contents of the predefined *entities* open to discovery.

• Have the PAP limit the *entity* attributes that delegates can reference in their policies.

• Apply access controls to the *entity* attributes accessed by delegate’s policies and policy sets during reduction [ADMIN] by the PDP.

A malicious policy writer could use *quantified expressions* to deliberately create policies that perform excessive computation resulting in a reduction of service or denial of service for applications using the PDP. *Quantified expressions* should be considered in whatever methods are used to mitigate denial of service attacks.
9 Conformance

An implementation claiming conformance with this specification MUST support the entity data-type defined in Section 4, the quantified expressions defined in Section 5 and all the functions defined in Section 6 except for the attribute-selector function. Support for the attribute-selector function is OPTIONAL.
Appendix A. Acknowledgments

The following individuals have participated in the creation of this specification and are gratefully acknowledged:

**Participants:**
Steven Legg, ViewDS Identity Solutions  
Hal Lockhart, Individual  
Erik Rissanen, Axiomatics  
Mohammad Jafari, Veterans Health Administration  
Rich Levinson, Oracle  
John Tolbert, Queralt, Inc.

**Voting members of the XACML Technical Committee:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bill Parducci</td>
<td>Individual</td>
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</tr>
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## Appendix B. Revision History

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revision</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Editor</th>
<th>Changes Made</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WD 01</td>
<td>22 Oct 2013</td>
<td>Steven Legg</td>
<td>Initial draft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WD 02</td>
<td>11 June 2015</td>
<td>Steven Legg</td>
<td>All the changes from the previous draft are editorial in nature. The content of the introduction has been rearranged into three sections: a new, briefer, non-normative overview with two high-level diagrams, a non-normative section on the background and a normative section on the specifics of related and nested entities. The section on the entity data type has been moved ahead of the section on quantified expressions. The XML Schema has been moved to a separate artifact.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WD 03</td>
<td>8 July 2015</td>
<td>Steven Legg</td>
<td>The return value for the attribute-selector function when the entity is absent or the &lt;Content&gt; element is absent has been specified.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WD 04</td>
<td>13 August 2020</td>
<td>Steven Legg</td>
<td>The base type for the QuantifiedExpressionType XML Schema type has been corrected in this profile and in the associated XML Schema file. The references have been updated to newer versions. The XML entity reference used in examples has been properly named in Section 1.3. Missing default namespace declarations in Figure 8 have been added. Spurious double spaces have been removed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WD 05</td>
<td>20 August 2020</td>
<td>Steven Legg</td>
<td>The JSON equivalent representation in figures 3 and 4 has changed from a JSON member to a JSON value (i.e., removed the “Attribute” prefix). The JSON profile now requires an array value for “Attribute”, but array notation here would be confusing.</td>
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