Published on *University of Colorado* (https://www.cu.edu)

UIS and CU Boulder use ODIN to improve the student experience [1]

January 22, 2024 by UIS Communications [2]

Update: Congratulations to the team, Kevin Sarsen, Faraz Aliand Karthik Chigururu for winning one of the four 2024 CU Innovation & Efficiency Awards [3]! The awards recognize CU employees whose ideas and innovations save the university time, money and resources.

Students applying to college often complain about the “hurry up and wait” aspect of the application and enrollment process.

CU Boulder’s Office of Information Technology (OIT) recently partnered with University Information Services (UIS) to improve one step in the process. Accepted students now receive their Boulder IdentiKey in half the previous time, thanks to UIS’ Open Data and Information Network (ODIN).

What changed?

Every CU Boulder student receives an IdentiKey, a credential unique to the individual that is necessary for access to the Buff Portal, their university email account, registration and housing. Activating their IdentiKey [4] is the first step newly admitted students take.

Until now, students often had to wait up to five days after receiving their acceptance letter for their IdentiKey. The new process shortened that timeframe to two days in Spring 2024, and next year the wait will be even shorter.

With a 26% overall increase in first-year applications for CU Boulder fall 2024, the new process was put to the test on Jan. 17, when letters went out to the first round of accepted students. A successful pilot program with Quick Admit in 2023 helped work out any issues for a smooth spring process.

What is ODIN’s role?

ODIN is a UIS-sponsored GraphQL Application Programming Interface (API) with access to near-real-time updates of enterprise data from multiple UIS systems. ODIN can be leveraged as a single-source repository to replace multiple point-to-point integrations between UIS and Campus OIT departments.

For the non-technical reader, that means ODIN can send data to CU Boulder instantaneously and even when source systems are down for maintenance. Previously, the batch process required days for campus systems to receive data updates. With ODIN, every message is

cached, even during a full system outage. ODIN runs servers across three geographic sites, so it is up 99.99% of the time, making data available even during production maintenance windows.

What’s next?

ODIN’s ability to trigger real-time messages in response to a data update has the potential to improve multiple parts of the student experience.

Pregash Devasagayam, CU Boulder Identity and Access Management (IAM) program manager, believes improving the IdentiKey timeline is just the beginning.

“Our team’s main motivation is student success, and we are always looking for creative ways to improve their experience. Having a tool like ODIN opens the dialogue so we can serve students better,” Devasagayam said.

Eventually, ODIN could enhance the housing application process and is also being piloted by CU Boulder’s New Student Welcome Program.

CU Boulder’s Buff Portal is currently testing iterations on the delivery of student records from ODIN. The benefits are several semesters away from being realized, said Paul O’Brian, Buff Portal product owner. Still, many are excited about ODIN’s potential to reflect a name change or a dropped course sooner — and the possibility of avoiding downtime during maintenance windows.

CU Denver, Anschutz Medical Campus and UCCS have ODIN access and are starting to explore how ODIN can provide new efficiencies for their data too.

Who made this happen?

Alicia Torres de Lozano, CU Boulder OIT senior project manager, and Elaine Schriefer, OIT principal business analyst, led a large collaborative team focused on optimizing incoming student data and improving their experience.

The team mapped out all data shared across systems, the sharing frequency and potential gaps. They identified improving the timing of IdentiKey provisioning as having the biggest impact on students and campus partners.

“The UIS ODIN team and CU Boulder’s AIM team were instrumental in making this goal a reality,” Schriefer said.

Within UIS, Kevin Sarsen, Integrations platform manager, led the integration with Allmond McDermott, Enterprise Data architecture manager, providing the schema and database objects. Faraz Ali, lead cloud applications engineer, and Karthik Chigururu, senior database administrator, put in place the event triggers for the messaging. Amar Tekriwal, Integrations Solutions manager, and his team identified the original process in Oracle Service Bus that ODIN replaced and Al Wirtes, director of Advanced Technology and Enterprise Architecture, served as a champion for ODIN and the entire project.

Within CU Boulder, in addition to Devasagayam, Torres de Lozano and Schriefer, Jon Gitner

served as the IT strategist, Skyler Middler as a business analyst for the IAM team, Kris Easter, as lead developer and application administrator, Kevin Foote, as IAM senior software engineer and the entire IAM team.

Display Title:
UIS and CU Boulder use ODIN to improve the student experience
Send email when Published:
No

Source URL:https://www.cu.edu/blog/uis-news/uis-and-cu-boulder-use-odin-improve-student-experience

Links
[1] https://www.cu.edu/blog/uis-news/uis-and-cu-boulder-use-odin-improve-student-experience
[2] https://www.cu.edu/blog/uis-news/author/145677 [3] https://www.cu.edu/controller/news/office-university-controller-news/june-27-2024-edition/cu-innovation-efficiency
[4] https://oit.colorado.edu/tutorial/identikey-manager-activate-my-identikey