
mod_shared_roster_ldap 0.4.0

Shared Roster LDAP Documentation

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Chapter 1

Introduction

`ejabberd` is a free and open source instant messaging server written in Erlang/OTP¹.

`mod_shared_roster_ldap` is a module for `ejabberd` which lets the server administrator automatically populate users' rosters (contact lists) with entries based on users and groups defined in an LDAP-based directory.

1.1 History

The module was initially written in 2005 by Alexey Shchepin (<mailto:alexey@sevcom.net>).

It was subsequently changed by Realloc (<mailto:realloc@realloc.spb.ru>) to make it Active Directory friendly and more usable. This developer has produced a russian-language web page about AD integration².

The module has spent some time posted on its contribution page³ where it has received fixes and minor improvements, however it was not actively developed nor properly maintained.

The most often requested part that was missing was comprehensive documentation. This document attempts to provide it. It was written by incorporating my own interpretation of the code and various descriptions contributed by other people on the `ejabberd` forums, e.g.:

- <http://www.ejabberd.im/node/1317>
- <http://www.ejabberd.im/node/3711#comment-54820>

This documentation attempts to be comprehensive and correct. However since it was written by analyzing the code, it may not follow the code author's exact intentions. Corrections and suggestions are welcome.

¹<http://www.erlang.org/>

²<http://realloc.spb.ru/share/ejabberd112ad.html>

³http://www.ejabberd.im/mod_shared_roster_ldap

This document, and `mod_shared_roster_ldap` code is maintained at the ejabberd-msrl project page⁴ on Alioth. The goal of the project is to provide a place for proper maintenance (with bug tracker, revision control, etc), where the state of this module documentation, featureset and performance can be improved.

1.2 How does `mod_shared_roster_ldap` work

The module does its job by a set of hooks, which it registers in the server on startup. Those hooks intercept the information flowing between a user and `ejabberd` and amend it with data retrieved from LDAP in such way as to provide the user with a permanent set of (additional) “virtual” entries in her roster.

“Virtual” in this context means that the module does not modify the rosters stored by the `mod_roster` module. Instead it “overlays” some additional entries on top of the ones maintained by the user herself, every time the user’s client retrieves the roster when connecting to `ejabberd`. This also means that the user cannot remove a `mod_shared_roster_ldap` entry from their roster permanently — it will be included in the roster on next reconnection.

1.3 Shameless plug

The LDAP graph pictures in section 3.4 were created with `ldif2dot`.⁵

⁴<https://alioth.debian.org/projects/ejabberd-msrl/>

⁵<http://marcin.owsiany.pl/ldif2dot-page>

Chapter 2

Installing mod_shared_roster_ldap

2.1 Installing with ejabberd from source

If you are installing `ejabberd` from source, then simply copying the `mod_shared_roster_ldap.erl`, `mod_shared_roster_ldap.hrl` and `mod_shared_roster_ldap_helpers.erl` files into the `src/` directory before running `make` will cause the modules to be compiled and installed with the rest of `ejabberd`.

2.2 Installing with an ejabberd binary package

If `ejabberd` has been installed from a binary package (or using the binary installer), you will need to build and install the module by yourself. Here are some instructions:

1. you need an Erlang runtime and compiler installation, they probably come together — check whether you have the `erl` and `erlc` commands. You should probably use the same (or close enough) erlang compiler version as the one which was used to compile your binary `ejabberd` installation.
2. you also need an unpacked *source* package of `ejabberd` (strictly speaking only the `*.hrl` headers are needed) for the same version as you binary `ejabberd` installation,¹
3. copy the files `mod_shared_roster_ldap_helpers.erl`, `mod_shared_roster_ldap.hrl` and `mod_shared_roster_ldap.erl`, into the `src/` subdirectory of `ejabberd` source tree
4. compile the modules by running the following in a terminal:²

¹If you run a Debian-based system, you should be able to get that easily with just `apt-get install dpkg-dev`; `apt-get source ejabberd`

²You need to have the compiler command `erlc` in your execution `PATH` variable, or specify the full path to `erlc`. In Windows it will be something like `"c:\Program Files\Erl5.6.5\bin\erlc.exe"`

```
erlc mod_shared_roster_ldap.erl  
erlc mod_shared_roster_ldap_helpers.erl
```

5. copy the resulting `mod_shared_roster_ldap.beam` and `mod_shared_roster_ldap_helpers.beam` to the `ejabberd` ebin directory³
6. restart `ejabberd` to let it load the module,

³this will be something like `/usr/lib/ejabberd/ebin` or `lib/ejabberd-your-version/ebin/` depending on your system.

Chapter 3

Configuring mod_shared_roster_ldap

3.1 Configuration parameters

The module accepts the following configuration parameters. Some of them, if unspecified for `mod_shared_roster_ldap`, default to the values specified for the top level of configuration. This lets you avoid specifying, for example, the bind password, in multiple places.

ldap_rfilter So called “Roster Filter”. This filter is run against the `ldap_base` to find names of all “shared roster” groups. See also the `ldap_groupattr` parameter. If unspecified, defaults to the top-level parameter of the same name.

ldap_ufilter “User Filter” – used when retrieving name of a group member. If unspecified, defaults to the top-level parameter of the same name. If that one also is unspecified, then the filter is assembled from values of other parameters as described in section 3.2.

ldap_gfilter “Group Filter” – used when retrieving members of a group or the name of a group. If unspecified, defaults to the top-level parameter of the same name. If that one also is unspecified, then the filter is assembled from values of other parameters as described in section 3.2.

You will probably need to define this parameter (since the auto-assembled filter will not work) if:

- your `ldap_memberattr_format` is anything other than a simple `%u`,
- **and** the attribute specified with `ldap_memberattr` does not support substring matches.

An example where it is the case is OpenLDAP and `(unique)MemberName` attribute from `groupOf(Unique)Names` objectClass. A symptom of this problem is that you will see messages such as the following in your `slapd.log`:

```
get_filter: unknown filter type=130
filter="(&(?=undefined)(?=undefined)(something=else))"
```

ldap_filter Additional filter which is applied together with filters for retrieving members of a group, and retrieving name of a group member. If unspecified, defaults to the top-level parameter of the same name. If that one is also unspecified, then no additional filter is not used.

ldap_groupattr The name of the attribute that holds the group name, and that is used to differentiate between them. Values of this parameter are retrieved when applying the “Roster Filter”. Defaults to `cn`.

ldap_groupdesc The name of the attribute which holds the human-readable group name in the objects you use to represent groups. Defaults to `cn`.

ldap_memberattr The name of the attribute which contains the IDs of the members of a group. Defaults to `memberUid`. The name of the attribute differs depending on the `objectClass` you use for your group objects, for example:

```
posixGroup → memberUid
groupOfNames → member
groupOfUniqueNames → uniqueMember
```

ldap_memberattr_format The format of the values of the parameter given by `ldap_memberattr`. Defaults to `%u`, which means that the whole value is the member ID.

ldap_memberattr_format_re A regex for the values of the parameter given by `ldap_memberattr`.

An example value `"CN=(\\w*), (OU=.*,)*DC=company,DC=com"` works for user IDs such as the following:

- `CN=Romeo,OU=Montague,DC=company,DC=com`
- `CN=Abram,OU=Servants,OU=Montague,DC=company,DC=com`
- `CN=Juliet,OU=Capulet,DC=company,DC=com`
- `CN=Peter,OU=Servants,OU=Capulet,DC=company,DC=com`

In case:

- the option is unset,
- or the `re` module is unavailable in the current Erlang environment,
- or the regular expression does not compile,

then instead of a regular expression, a simple format specified by `ldap_memberattr_format` is used. Also, in the last two cases an error message is logged during the module initialization.

ldap_auth_check Whether the module should check (via the ejabberd authentication subsystem) for existence of each user in the shared LDAP roster. See section 3.3. Set to `off` if you want to disable the check. Defaults to `on`.

ldap_userdesc The name of the attribute which holds the human-readable user name. Defaults to `cn`.

ldap_userid The name of the attribute which holds the ID of a roster item. Value of this attribute in the roster item objects needs to match the ID retrieved from the `ldap_memberattr` attribute of a group object. Defaults to `cn`.

ldap_user_cache_validity Number of seconds for which the cache for roster item full names is considered fresh after retrieval. 300 by default. See section 3.3 on how it is used during roster retrieval.

The module also accepts the following parameters, all of which default to the top-level parameter of the same name, if unspecified. See the **ejabberd** User Guide chapter 3.2.5 LDAP Configuration¹ for more information about them.

ldap_servers List of LDAP server hostnames to connect to.

ldap_port Port to use for LDAP connections.

ldap_base Search base DN — the module will look for entries under this element.

ldap_rootdn The “bind DN” to use.

ldap_password The bind password.

3.2 Module startup

When the module loads, it reads the options, and then creates several filter strings which will be used during its operation. Here is how they are constructed (I’m using `[ldap_SOMETHING]` to mean “the value of the configuration parameter `ldap_SOMETHING`”).

Roster Filter — used for retrieving names of all groups. Simply taken as the value of `ldap_rfilter`.

Group Filter — used for retrieving the human-readable group name, and for retrieving members of a group. If parameter `ldap_gfilter` was specified, it is used. Otherwise, it is constructed as:

```
(&(&([ldap_memberattr]=[ldap_memberattr_format with *])([ldap_groupattr]=GROUP_NAME))[ldap_filter])
```

Which would be `(&(memberUid=uid=*)(cn=Staff))`, given the defaults, and when dealing with group “Staff”. If however the `ldap_memberattr_format` is something like `uid=%u,ou=People,o=org`, then the filter will be `(&(memberUid=uid=*,ou=People,o=org)(cn=Staff))`.

User Filter — used for retrieving the human-readable name of roster entries (usually full names of people in the roster). If parameter `ldap_ufilter` was specified, it is used. Otherwise, it is constructed as:

```
(&(&([ldap_memberattr]=*)([ldap_groupattr]=*)) [ldap_filter])
```

Which would be: `(&(memberUid=*)(cn=*))`, given the defaults.

¹<http://www.process-one.net/en/ejabberd/guide.en#htoc38>

3.3 Retrieving the roster

When the module is called to get the shared roster for a user it does the following:

1. Creates the list of names of groups to display: runs the **Roster Filter** against the base DN, retrieving the values of the attribute named by `ldap_groupattr`.
2. For each item (group name) in this list, it:
 - (a) finds IDs of all users that belong to it:
 - i. Runs the **Group Filter** against the Base DN, retrieving the values of attribute named by `ldap_memberattr`
 - ii. for each retrieved value, finds the user ID part of it using `ldap_memberattr_format(_re)`,
 - iii. then (unless `ldap_auth_check` is set to `off`) for each found user ID, it checks (using the `ejabberd` authentication subsystem) whether such user exists in the given virtual host.
 - iv. finds the display name of a shared roster user:
 - A. first, unless the name cache is fresh (see the `ldap_user_cache_validity` option), it is refreshed by running the **User Filter**, against the Base DN, retrieving the values of attributes named by `ldap_userid` and `ldap_userdesc`.
 - B. then, the display name for the given user ID is retrieved from the cache.
 - v. skips the user if it's the same as the one for which we are retrieving the roster. This is so that the user does not have himself in the roster.
 - (b) finds the display name of a shared roster group: Runs the **Group Filter** against the Base DN, retrieving the value of attribute named by `ldap_groupdesc`.

3.4 Configuration examples

Since there are many possible DIT² layouts, it will probably be easiest to understand how to configure the module by looking at an example for a given DIT (or one resembling it).

3.4.1 Flat DIT

This seems to be the kind of DIT for which this module was initially designed. Basically there are just user objects, and group membership is stored in an attribute individually for each user. For example in a layout shown in figure 3.1, the group of each user is stored in its `ou` attribute.

Such layout has a few downsides, including:

- information duplication – the group name is repeated in every member object
- difficult group management – information about group members is not centralized, but distributed between member objects

²http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Directory_Information_Tree

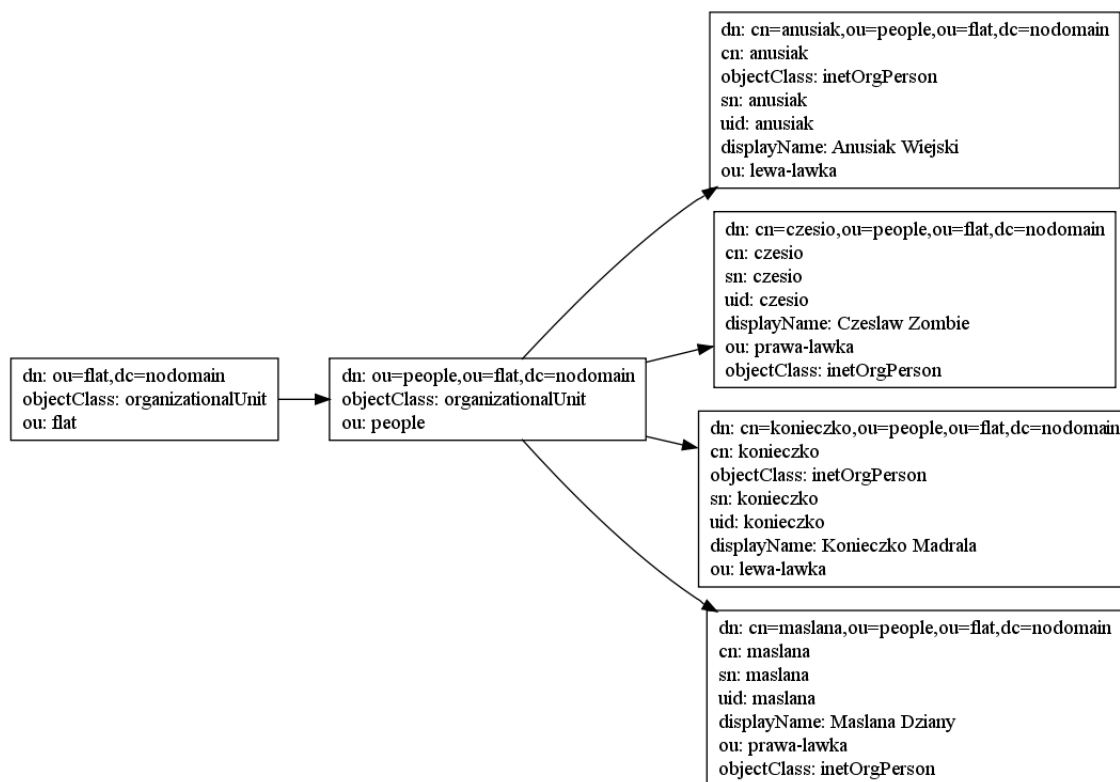


Figure 3.1: Flat DIT graph

- inefficiency – the list of unique group names has to be computed by iterating over all users

This however seems to be a common DIT layout, so the module keeps supporting it. You can use the following configuration...

```
{mod_shared_roster_ldap,[
  {ldap_base, "ou=flat,dc=nodomain"},
  {ldap_rfilter, "(objectClass=inetOrgPerson)"},
  {ldap_groupattr, "ou"},
  {ldap_memberattr, "cn"},
  {ldap_filter, "(objectClass=inetOrgPerson)"},
  {ldap_userdesc, "displayName"}
]},
```

...to be provided with a roster as shown in figure 3.2 upon connecting as user *czesio*.

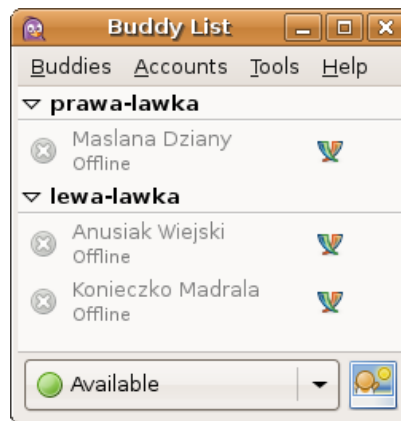


Figure 3.2: Roster from flat DIT

3.4.2 Deep DIT

This type of DIT contains distinctly typed objects for users and groups – see figure 3.3. They are shown separated into different subtrees, but it's not a requirement.

If you use the following example module configuration with it:

```
{mod_shared_roster_ldap,[
  {ldap_base, "ou=deep,dc=nodomain"},
  {ldap_rfilter, "(objectClass=groupOfUniqueNames)"},
  {ldap_filter, ""},
  {ldap_gfilter, "(&(objectClass=groupOfUniqueNames)(cn=%g))"},
  {ldap_groupdesc, "description"},
  {ldap_memberattr, "uniqueMember"},

```

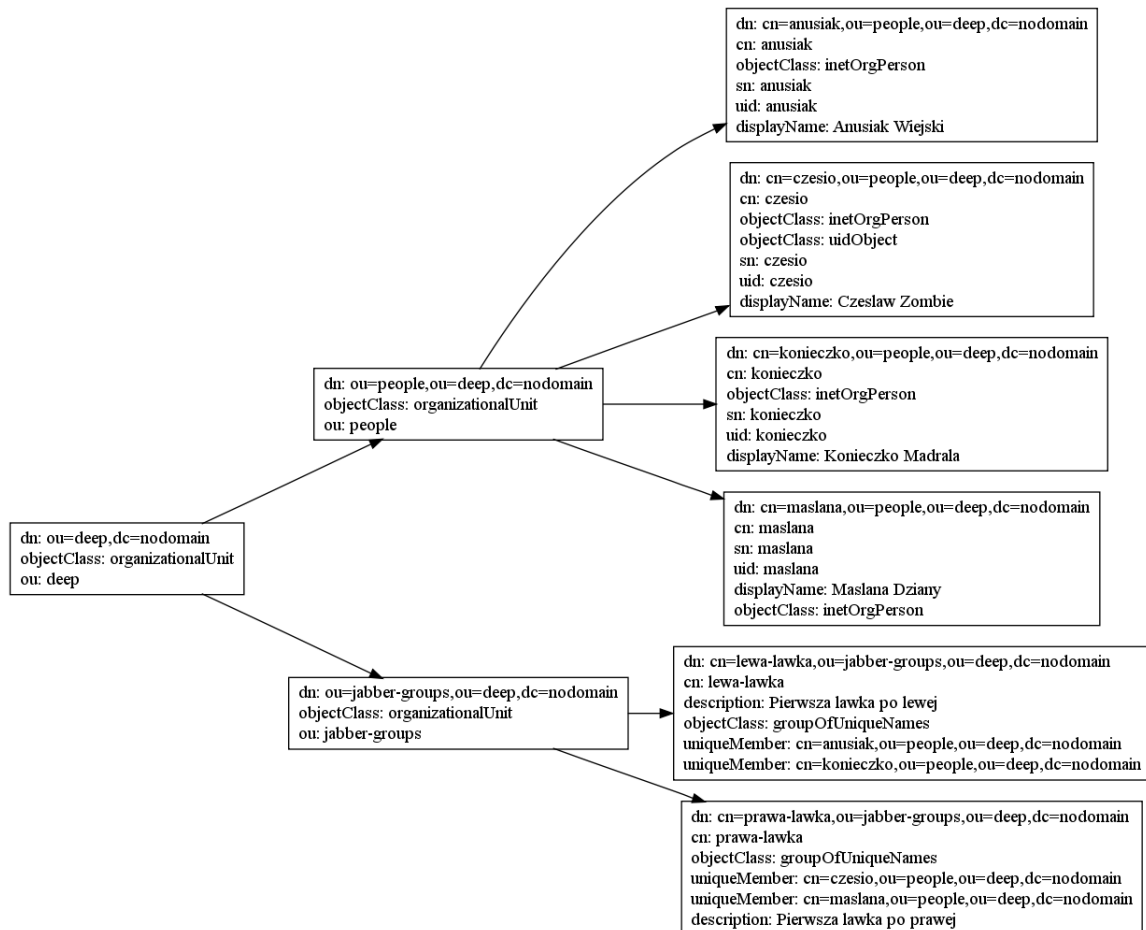


Figure 3.3: Example “deep” DIT graph

```
{ldap_memberattr_format, "cn=%u,ou=people,ou=deep,dc=nodomain"},  
{ldap_ufilter, "(&(objectClass=inetOrgPerson)(cn=%u))"},  
{ldap_userdesc, "displayName"}  
}},
```

... and connect as user *czesio*, then *ejabberd* will provide you with the roster shown in figure 3.4.

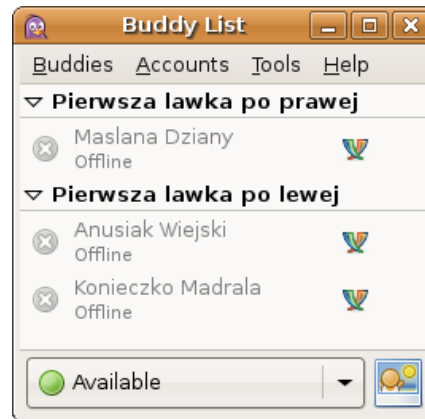


Figure 3.4: Example roster from “deep” DIT

Appendix A

Release Notes

Here are the release notes for each release, in reverse-chronological order.

0.4.0 — Changes:

- added a couple of new source files: `mod_shared_roster_ldap_helpers.erl` and `mod_shared_roster_ldap.hrl`. Note the updated installation instructions in chapter 2.
- added new option `ldap_memberattr_format_re` which lets you use regular expressions for extracting user IDs from attribute values, rather than simple patterns,
- added new option `ldap_auth_check` which lets you skip a verification LDAP call for each roster item,
- added new option `ldap_userid` which lets you specify the name of the attribute which holds the ID of a user roster entry,
- changed the way roster item descriptions (human-friendly names) are retrieved. Instead of making an LDAP query per each roster item (which caused significant roster retrieval latency in case of large rosters) now all descriptions are retrieved with a single query for all roster items from a given domain and cached. See section 3.3 for more information about this. This is the first and probably most significant step for fixing bug #312211¹. Feedback is welcome on how this affects performance and memory usage.
- changed the `process_item` function (which gets called when user moves or renames items in their roster) to no longer use `Filter` for checking whether a user belongs to a group. Instead it uses the same mechanism as when loading the roster after login (described in section 3.3). I suspect this **will be slower**, sometimes significantly, than the previous approach (feedback welcome). However using this mechanism will make it easier to cache the results in the future release, leading to overall speedup.
- added instructions for installing with a binary `ejabberd` package,
- made the module log a message when it crashes,

¹https://alioth.debian.org/tracker/index.php?func=detail&aid=312211&group_id=100433&atid=413107

- added unit tests for several important functions, using a couple of mocking libraries,
- simplified or eliminated some functions by extracting common code into helper functions,

— Credits:

- The patch adding support for the `ldap_memberattr_format_re` and `ldap_auth_check` options was contributed by Denis Kurochkin.

0.3.1 — Documentation-only changes:

- added a note that defining `ldap_gfilter` is necessary when substring matching would otherwise be necessary but unavailable for `ldap_memberattr`

0.3.0 — Changes:

- added unit tests for option parsing,
- added `ldap_ufilter` and `ldap_gfilter` options. This fixes bug #312171².
- changed the example a little and added another one for a flat DIT

0.2.0 — Changes:

- applied a patch to allow the module to work with `ejabberd 2.1.x` — missing argument to `eldap:start_link`
- applied a patch from badlop and mikekaganski to `nodeprep` users retrieved in `get_group_users`
- optimize `get_user_roster` to only call `get_group_name` once per group. Patch provided by badlop and mikekaganski.

0.1.1 — Initial release:

- an unversioned `mod_shared_roster_ldap.erl` imported from a webpage,
- wrote the documentation,
- there are several problems in this version:
 - does not work with `ejabberd` version 2.1 due to a missing `eldap:start_link` parameter,
 - human-readable name of each group is needlessly retrieved as many times as the group's member count,
 - roster is the same for all users — contains all groups,
 - there is just one base DN, which has to contain all user and group objects. This is very broad/inflexible and potentially inefficient.

²https://alioth.debian.org/tracker/index.php?func=detail&aid=312171&group_id=100433&atid=413107

Appendix B

Copyright Information

`mod_shared_roster_ldap` documentation.

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