



# What is Web-Based Authentication?

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Web authentication is a Layer 3 security solution designed for providing easy and secure guest access to hosts on WLAN with open authentication or appropriate layer 2 security methods. Web authentication allows users to get authenticated through a web browser on a wireless client, with minimal configuration on the client side. It allows users to associate with an open SSID without having to set up a user profile. The host receives an IP address and DNS information from the DHCP server, however cannot access any of the network resources until they authenticate successfully. When the host connects to the guest network, the WLC redirects the host to an authentication web page where the user needs to enter valid credentials. The credentials are authenticated by the WLC or an external authentication server and if authenticated successfully is given full access to the network. Hosts can also be given limited access to particular network resources before authentication for which the pre-authentication ACL functionality needs to be configured.

The following are the different types of web authentication methods:

- **Local Web Authentication (LWA):** Configured as Layer 3 security on the controller, the web authentication page and the pre-authentication ACL are locally configured on the controller. The controller intercepts http(s) traffic and redirects the client to the internal web page for authentication. The credentials entered by the client on the login page is authenticated by the controller locally or through a RADIUS or LDAP server.
- **External Web Authentication (EWA):** Configured as Layer 3 security on the controller, the controller intercepts http(s) traffic and redirects the client to the login page hosted on the external web server. The credentials entered by the client on the login page is authenticated by the controller locally or through a RADIUS or LDAP server. The pre-authentication ACL is configured statically on the controller.
- **Central Web Authentication (CWA):** Configured mostly as Layer 2 security on the controller, the redirection URL and the pre-authentication ACL reside on ISE and are pushed during layer 2 authentication to the controller. The controller redirects all web traffic from the client to the ISE login page. ISE validates the credentials entered by the client through HTTPS and authenticates the user.

