Infotrust eXchange

Information Trust Exchange Governing Assn.
http://www.itega.org

NOTES OF BILL DENSMORE
FOR PANEL DISCUSSION ON TRUST
JUNE 13, 2018

These notes were prepared to support a discussion on news-industry wide trust initiatives at the Inaugural TrustXchange gathering, June 13, 2018, organized by News Media Alliance and held in the First Amendment Dining Hall at Gannett Corp., headquarters in Reston, Va. Additional information may be found at:
http://newshare.com/nma

Thanks to Rebecca and to Danielle, who I saw yesterday at the "Open Markets: Breaking the News" gathering, for organizing this timely discussion.

I'm executive director of a new, 501(c)3 nonprofit called the Information Trust Exchange Governing Association -- or ITEGA.ORG for sort. Part of ITEGA's public mission is to create and guide the way individual identity and privacy are managed on the Internet – an alternative to either government regulation or private-investor platform dominance. [1]

I'd like to offer a quick overview of ITEGA, then some thoughts about trust, then background on ITEGA's academic roots, and explain the next steps resulting from our April 19-20, 2018 founding meeting at the Pocantico Conference Center of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

ITEGA is concerned with:

- Helping users regain control of their privacy and identity
- Helping publishers improve the relevance and value of advertising and news through deeper, "permissioned" knowledge about their users
- Moving toward a platform where a "fast pass for news" is possible without dependence on the tech platform companies.

Much of the current pushback against Facebook focuses on the ways it's becoming the central channel through which news is spread. One response is to strengthen existing news organizations as trusted channels, rather than trying to pressure or assume Facebook or Google as central actors in the space.

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[1] -- See Jeff Jarvis' March, 2015 blog post on user-data transfer,

We aim to specify and support networks for the exchange of user data and content, in ways which respect and empower the identity and privacy choices of individuals.

NEUTRAL GOVERNANCE – ICANN FOR IDENTITY

ITEGA provides Internet stakeholders a neutral forum to develop and implement business rules, specifications and shared technology protocols – standards to protect privacy, manage identity, foster trust and facilitate the exchange of value on the web.

Also, ITEGA will provide exchange governance to ensure that ITEGA members – publishers, content providers, information-technology vendors and others – are truthful and identified, and can be trusted with our identity. The rules should affect how data is transferred, what data is transferred, and how individuals manage rights to those data.

ITEGA's an outgrowth of years of research, convenings and study for and by the Donald W. Reynolds Journalism Institute (RJI) at the Missouri School of Journalism. Our aim is simple -- to make individual news sites more commercially viable. We do this by creating what ex-FCC chairman Tom Wheeler told me in a meeting in November – "an ICANN for identity" not dependent upon either government regulation or private platform dominance.

Much of the current pushback against Facebook focuses on the ways it's becoming the central channel through which news is spread. One response is to strengthen existing news organizations as trusted channels, rather than working to pressure or assume Google or Facebook as a central actors in the space. The hard truth is that no one news provider, no matter how large, is going to be able to match the scale at which Facebook, Google and other platforms work. Working together, however, the news ecosystem -- and related info-tech and content fields -- can build a common user-data marketplace -- one which the digital giants will want to be part of and regulators will encourage.

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A CONTEXT FOR TRUST

Perhaps no other word has re-emerged as more central to our personal, civic and political frames in the last few years than that word trust. But it is called to work in multiple contexts, and that is true within the bounds of today's discussion.

"Trust" in ITEGA's name refers to network or data trust. We don't see ITEGA's role as arbitrating elements of trust in news or content. There are people sitting to either side of me who are making tremendous strides to identify, categorize, reveal and support news that is worthy of our trust -- journalism that matters. That is an essential starting point and a building block for the news ecosystem we all seek.

TRUSTED PLATFORM

Trust is the basic building block of human and business relationships. Without it, commerce is not possible because people/companies will face uncertainty. Trust can be direct (one-to-one) or proxied. Most of our trust relationships are proxied, and they are generally based upon historical knowledge.

Among the many epidemics of mis-trust in our civic life today is the mistrust of how our identities are parsed and shared across the web in support of advertising and other services. The basic Internet does not support trust because connections (relationships) can be "stateless" and ephemeral. There have been many "hacks" to overcome this (such as website Secure Certificates). But the core problem evolves from the fact that interactions are via a wire or wireless, not in person. TCP/IP didn't envision identity management, so we have "hacked" it with cookies. But the cookie kitchen is a mess.

We need a marketplace – rules and systems for trustworthy exchange of user data -- that can sustain journalism. And the operation of that marketplace must itself be worthy of trust. Today, many of the marketplaces where we can find journalism that matters are either unsustainable or untrustworthy.

ITEGA seeks to create the platform, the marketplace -- mechanisms of exchange -- where trustworthy news can thrive. Because we all agree that access to news -- worthy of our trust -- is necessary to a functioning participatory democracy.

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We need an open platform that makes it easy for users to work with media publishers they might trust -- to navigate the news easily with perhaps a single ID and a customizable experience. Because the defining challenge for publishers is no longer just managing valuable information, it is also helping the public manage *our* attention and identity. And we need a platform that will help with that task.   We need to become what Yale professor Jack Balkin has called "information fiduciaries."

TRUST AT POCANTICO

The word trust came up repeatedly at ITEGA's founding meeting April 19-20, 2018 at Pocantico. We operated there under the Chatham House Rule, but here are some anonymous quotes that should inform our thinking today:

> *"It's about confidence in the reliability of the network working together. The trustworthiness of the stewards -- the existing agents (such as newspapers) is an issue in the on-boarding process -- getting people to sign up in the first place."*

> *"Transparency goes hand in hand with trust. To establish and keep trust with those who interact with you they have to understand how you work."*

"Individuals will make their own decision about the infomediary they wish to trust. Our task is to think about creating trustworthiness at the code and protocol level."

"An ITEGA goal should be to architect the flows of data so that users can trust that they have control over who uses it, how and when. Defining the problem and solutions is a challenge for which there is presently no governing organization to provide the independent assurances that business players cannot. Thus some are looking for a third party to create a trust framework."

"The newspaper can say, 'we are ITEGA complaint by choice and here's why: This is the best technology we know of for protecting your privacy.' End of story. You don't have to have a chart about what you are doing. The name of the newspaper brand is enough. Of course it is not that yet, but it could be that."

"The beauty of the proposed ITEGA marketplace -- you have a choice of who to trust. In an ITEGA ecosystem, the publisher can share users with other publishers without having to reveal details that would make the other publisher a competitor; the individual user can access information anywhere without having to repeatedly enter personal information of register; the end user also can express interests and control use of their data; the advertiser can deliver a message tailored to an individual knowing that it is responsive to their present and expressed interests; but without the risk of dealing with personal identifying information."

THE ORIGINS OF ITEGA

Having described the context in which we use trust, let me overview ITEGA's origins and current trajectory.

RJI's research began as the Information Valet Project. Many years of interviews and convenings resulted in a first report, "From Paper to Persona" in 2011. It advanced a call for the news industry to stop thinking of itself as being in a physical product business and begin to imagine itself as being in the business of helping people find the information -- all the information -- that matters to their daily civic, personal and entertainment needs.

We interviewed more than 85 experts in an out of the news industry for a follow on report in 2015, "From Persona to Payment." In that 2015 report, RJI asked:

> *The report did not detail consumer services or plead for a particular industry's survival. Rather, it argued for infrastructure collaboration. The report said that unless journalism publishers respond, bundlers, aggregators and platform owners will become the dominant providers – and financial beneficiaries -- of providing information to citizens.*

"Could a public-benefit collaboration sustain journalism and privacy in a new market for digital information? To benefit consumers, the exchange would to support personalization, user authentication and payment services -- that shared-user network for trust, identity privacy and information commerce.   It would rigorously respect and support anti-monopoly and antitrust law and avoid making policy or rules respecting pricing or specific services offerings to the public. The ITE would sanction but not directly operate the network elements. It would establish the marketplace but leave the conduct of it to competing private entities. Members might include publishers, foundations, universities, banks, telecoms, publishers, tech and entertainment companies, and the public."

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THE TASK GROUP MEETINGS

To take this work and reports to the next level, RJI underwrote a series of five task-group meetings around the country during late 2015. The 10-15-person task groups met in Chicago, Cambridge, Mass.; Portland, Ore.; New York City and at RJI in Missouri. People from places such as Reuters (Reg Chua), the LMC (Chris Hendricks), Mozilla (Don Marti), Hearst (Mike Smith/Esfand Pourmand), Gannett (Mizelle Stewart), The Atlantic (Brian Muller), the San Diego Union (Jeff Light), public media (Kathy Merritt, Charlie Kravetz), and IBM (Dan Gilsolfi/trusted engineer/identity), the IAB (Brendan Riordan-Butterworth), Reuters Institute (Bob Picard), MIT (Ethan Zuckerman), The Democracy Fund (Josh Stearns), Lenfest Institute (Hong Qu) and the Annie E. Casey Foundation (Norris West), have been part of these and our founding meeting April 19-20.

Topics included:

- Member and partner development -- Sept. 15-16 at RJI-Mizzou in Columbia, Mo.
- Authentication and identity management -- Sept. 22-23 in Cambridge, Mass.
- Content description, tagging, sharing and selling -- Sept. 29-30 in Portland, Ore.
- User data and privacy-preferences exchange – Oct. 7-8 in NYC

During 2016, we reviewed the work of these day-long meetings and developed a set of moving documents -- functional specifications, business rules, exchange rules and other governance documents and a launch plan. By the end of 2016, it was clear that a new organization not burdened by an existing agenda was needed.

We and counsel studied the bylaws of ICANN and the Mozilla Foundation and in January, 2017, incorporated the Information Trust Exchange Governing Association as a California public-benefit corporation. In July 2017, we were granted 501(c)3 status by the IRS.

Our initial founding board of directors includes Bill Buzenberg and Linda Miller from public media, ex-Reuters venture capital chief and British entrepreneur John Taysom, former Internet Society secretary and longtime Internet Engineer Task Force stalwart Scott Bradner, and our board chair, Jo Ellen Green Kaiser, of The Media Consortium. Our organizing documents call in time for a larger, diverse and international board.

THREE OUTCOMES OF POCANTICO

The founding meeting April 19-20, 2018 was at the Pocantico Conference Center of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, in Tarrytown, N.Y. You can find a report on that meeting, and other resources, at http://newshare.com/nma

Quite simply, ITEGA is an open alternative to the way advertising and social networks are infringing on personal privacy. At Pocantico, one participant termed the effort creation of a "data-protection trust." Another called it a "verified news network." At least three initiatives appear to have been sparked by the gathering:

- A working proposal to work with the Internet Society and the Local Media Consortium to proceed with structured meetings involving multiple stakeholders such as publishers, public radio and TV interests, advertisers, browser and tech makers, civil society and privacy advocates. The meetings will seek consensus on business and technology rules and protocols for user-data sharing that are enforceable by ITEGA -- rather than dependent upon government regulation.

- A decision by the Sovrin Foundation -- which is working with Deutsche Telekom and with IBM on a user-controlled digital trust network for credit unions -- to embrace ITEGA and journalism as its second industry network. "It's all about the network effect," said one participant of this alliance. "You're already there. You are seriously already there." Sovrin champion an approach to "self-sovereign identity" on the web through the use of a digital wallet on your phone, computer or in the cloud, which contains identity credentials for the things you do in banking, health care -- or information services. This is one of potentially many approaches to identity management ITEGA might encourage.

- The start of a collaboration among technologists to integrate news personalization, network subscriptions, anonymized ad serving, identity management and blockchain fashioned distributed-ledger services in a coordinated demonstration of the ITEGA ecosystem.

FUNDING

Our work to date has been funded by RJI, by donations from individual founding members and by volunteer efforts. To undertake the multistakeholder initiative with ISOC and NMA, ITEGA will obtain a round of support from foundations, additional individuals, publishers and other news organizations.

PROTOTYPING

Planning is underway for two demonstrations:

- Use Shibboleth 2 to develop a federated authentication network that includes the enhancement of defining a method for transferring permissioned user data, and the schema for those data.

- An anonymous user data exchange (UDEX.org) in partnerships.

--- END OF NOTES ---

For comments or information:

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