Infotrust eXchange

What are the goals of the ITE?

The Information Trust Exchange project is an effort to preserve the open web and open sharing of information and value. It creates the opportunity for users to manage their privacy and identity in an environment controlled not by government or by private investors, but by a public-benefit consortium that enables competition and choice. It's goals:

Initially . . .

- Privacy management for consumers; getting value for your "persona"

- More effective advertising through interest-based customization

And later . . .

- Enabling subscription networks and vicarious (per-click) sale of valuable information to the right person at the right time.

A vision is to allow a plurality of information-service providers to exchange users, content and services in an "everybody wins" scenario where the core architecture and service is governed by a non-stock collaborative. A consumer's most-trusted "information agent" will work with the user to store and manage demographic and personalization information, which the consumer can allow to be shared across the network on a event-by-event basis.

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Background / rationale

By David Gehring

Traditional publishers now clearly know that "first-party" user data is fundamental to their business going forward. Most, if not all, use analytics platforms extensively and have devised methods for aggregating user data themselves as their users engage with their products and platforms.

This data is leveraged in a variety of ways including: to improve products and services with an understanding of user behaviors; to improve advertising monetization rates by informing audience targetability and driving engagement through tailored recommendations and relevant content and in the context of paid models, to drive users through the customer acquisition funnel toward becoming paid subscribers.

Without robust first-party data, a publisher cannot hope to grow or manage their business.

However, even if a publisher aggregates, manages and takes full advantage of all this user data in beautifully structured ways, no publisher has sufficient independent audience reach to support scaling the revenue lines effectively on their own.

Additionally, very few publishers can afford the data science expertise and organizational depth to know what data to aggregate and how best to leverage the data toward driving product innovation and optimizing monetization. These skills and talents are not typical of a journalistically focused organization.

Making matters more complicated, off-platform distribution is now fundamentally required for audience scale. Production of quality content and its distribution (or audience engagement) are irreversibly disintermediated. The proliferation of platforms and distribution technologies has, at best, severely segmented the technical requirements for benefiting from user data and at worse, the market segmentation has made the aggregation of user data significantly more challenging to begin with.

Publishers (and platforms) need help.

Standardizing the structure for user data and facilitating a method for sharing user data across a network or exchange that respects the user's privacy could go a long way to increasing efficiency and optimization in the publishing business.

This project is focused on landscaping the current activities in the marketplace designed to:

1. Define the benefits of an industry standard approach to user data

2. Discover the efforts currently underway that seek to address the problem

3. Discern a role for the Reynolds Journalism Institute that positions the institute to play a part in perpetuating an industry solution

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WHAT MIGHT WE SEEK TO TEST?

At a May 6, 2015 roundtable discussion in Chicago, there was strong agreement that a collaborative initiative setting open standards for network user-identity management and the tagging for use and sale of content would help journalism as well as elements of the news industry able and willing to participate. Lodging creation and governance with a *non-stock collaborative* was seen as having distinct advantages.

Notes from the Oct. 8, 2015 meeting of the ITE user data and privacy task group suggest "How Things Should Work" (underlining added for emphasis):

> *It was suggested that publishers are unified in wanting to end the use of third-party cookies on their web services. As a result, an ITE prototype solution that creates the promise of a new method for customizing ad delivery – with an added benefit of opt-in user personalization – would likely be appealing.*
>
> *Another participant appealed for the creation of "crisp" requirements for any prototype so they can be acted on "in a stepwise fashion."*

A Request for Proposals for proof-of-concept demonstrations and working prototypes describes services that will produce the following user experience (set out narratively here).

1. ITE task group meetings concluded that proof-of-concept testing could be helpful to integrate services in three overall areas:

     a)   User data and exchange
     b)   Content description, tagging, sharing and selling
     c)   Authentication and identity management

2. RJI is prepare requests for proposals for proof-of-concept demonstrations or working trials, together or separately, for up to five elements of the ITE Framework:

     a)   USER ATTRIBUTES/SHARING -- Develop a taxonomy of user attributes and proposed terms for sharing them across the Exchange ecosystem.

     b)   CONTENT ACCESS CONTROL --- Assure publishers that service will control (or at minimum track) access to content and that, if value is to be exchanged, there is an accounting system.

     c)   CONTENT PACKAGING -- Custom assembly by/for end user on a topical and/or geographic basis, of information resources based on inferred or expressed interests/peferences.

     d)   LOGGING ACTIVITY -- Clicks involving exchange of value are universally logged in a process governed by the ITE and set up to return usage data to the end-user's designated service provider.

     e)   ONE BILL / ACCOUNT -- Demonstrations and trials must show the ability to aggregate discovery, access and billing of content across distributed sources.

APPENDIX A

INFORMATION TRUST EXCHANGE
TASK-FORCE ASSIGNMENTS

For a list of task-group participants, see:
http://newshare.com/ite-next/ite-task-group-MEMBERS-10-05-15.pdf

Member/partner development (met Sept. 16, Columbia, Mo.)

- Verify assumptions about requirements for pain/gain both with consumers and media
- Confirm staff's estimates of funding required
- Facilitate preparation of grant proposal(s)
- Conduct presentations to target funders; assess and regroup

Authentication and identity management (Met Sept. 24, Cambridge, Mass.)

- Confirm business requirements for service
- Survey best and emerging practices for federated-authentication / SSO
- Select optimum combination of existing technology extended with ability to be extended for sharing of user data (preferences, attributes) as part of authentication and events.
- Facilitate prototype development and concept testing.

Content description, tagging, sharing and selling (Met Sept. 30, Portland, Oregon)

- Survey best practices for content type tagging, access and usage control and pricing among wire services, archival services.
- Create draft schema for content type and authorized-usage tagging.
- Describe preferred method(s) for content owner to dynamically "show" price in 1-to-1 sale and buyer to accept/reject, with variability as to type of content and use authorized/rejected.
- Share with data, authentication and member task forces for feedback
- Circulate informally for comment among cohorts and key publishers

User data and exchange / privacy   (Met Oct. 8 in New York City)

- Survey best-practice for data fields among data-service-providers, publisher legacy subscription services and technology platform companies (if available)
- Create draft schema for user data formats
- Draft exchange sharing rules covering user authorization, data types and data usage.
- Share with Content, authentication and member task forces for feedback
- Circulate informally for comment among cohorts, including key platforms, associations, privacy groups and regulators.