



<http://www.infotrust.org>

## The Information Trust Exchange Governing Association <sup>1</sup>

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

A non-profit, member-guided Information Trust Exchange Governing Association (ITEGA) seeks \$950,000 over two years to help design, prototype and then govern -- in the public interest -- competing shared-user networks for trust, identity, privacy and information commerce.

#### **PROBLEM**

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Our society faces an epidemic loss of trust:

- Trust in the ability of government to work for everyone.
- Trust in the sustainability of communities
- Trust that the future will be better than the past
- Trust in the veracity of facts in science, and media

*Consumers need a "fast pass" for information – a way to access content on ITEGA member websites without having to establish relationships with each member.*

#### **RESPONSE**

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ITEGA's mission addresses specific aspects of trust in the digital-information world by:

- Helping members of the public to safely manage their privacy and identity
- Sanctioning technology and business frameworks for thriving journalism and civic information
- Fostering open and public access to digital information, both free and paid

By helping restore trust in information exchange, ITEGA creates a media climate for restoring trust in participatory democracy. It addresses two seemingly unrelated challenges that have disrupted the business of publishing in a digital age – identity, privacy and payment.

- **PRIVACY / IDENTITY** -- Our identities are spread across the web in bits and pieces, compromising our privacy. Increasingly, identity is controlled by private companies like Goggle or Facebook. Digital networks and technology platforms – rather than publishers -- are now the dominant venue for advertising. Publishers have less and less understanding of their customers interests and preferences, making it harder for them to sell advertising. Many users are “blocking” ads. What’s needed is a service that puts our privacy and identity under our own control with the help of a public-benefit entity.

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<sup>1</sup> -- An independent, nonprofit, public-benefit corporation formed Jan. 30, 2017 in the State of California. See the [Articles of Incorporation](#).

- **PAYMENT** -- There's no way to network and sell content in small bits on the web. That means there's no way for people to assemble a subscription package of information specific to their interests -- and be able to conveniently pay for it. Existing methods for the public to pay for information are generally uncoordinated ("siloes") or serve niches (such as music). Consumers need a "fast pass" for information -- a way to access content on ITEGA member websites without having to establish relationships with each member.

Without these two, all content is going to end up on a couple of platforms -- like Facebook's Instant Articles, Google AMP or Apple News -- and publishers will have little relationship with their users. What's needed is a coordinated service that simultaneously provides for the sharing of user identity when needed, keeps privacy under the control of the user, yet allows for networked payments. A service where Big Brother is both blind and benign.

It's time for an audacious, collaborative, "NetGain" initiative to put such a service in place -- governed by a nonprofit, public benefit organization that enables choice, innovation and competition. The collaborative requires the support of foundations, publishers, technologists -- and the public's trust. As a "third way", it can pre-empt stifling regulation -- or a privately owned platform duopoly.

## THE THIRD WAY OPPORTUNITY

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ITEGA was incorporated Jan. 30, 2017, to address this third-way opportunity -- to guide creation of a shared-user network for trust, identity, privacy and information commerce. ITEGA is a nonprofit consortium for citizens and publishers and other members. It helps Internet users to manage their privacy and identity and publishers to offer more personalized services that can sustain quality, trustworthy journalism.

The ITEGA defines, guides and governs a layer of Internet business rules and network protocols for sharing user authentication, profiles, advertising, copyright payments and billing. It does not own or run any of the business operations involved in the creation or distribution of news or advertising. Rather it creates open, standard rules of the road for those operators -- an "open market" for digital-information exchange.

ITEGA meets needs of the public and publishers -- especially news publishers -- for trustworthy information, transparent, user-centric privacy and identity management, and financial support for the values, principles and purposes of journalism in current or future forms.

## PROOF-OF-CONCEPT PROTOTYPING

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Proof-of-concept prototyping of key operating features of an ITEGA-sanctioned ecosystem -- networked subscriptions and payment, anonymized user identities and news personalization, is getting underway during April.

ITEGA seeks \$950,000 in foundation support over two years to:

- Refine and codify exchange rules and protocols for ITEGA members.
- Engage with private entities to compete in offering key ecosystem functions like authentication, user-data management and anonymization, payment aggregation and settlement.
- Guide launch of commercial ITEGA-compliant services in identity management, network subscription and per-click payment services, and trustworthy advertising.
- Bring ITEGA to cash-flow positive in order to start supporting civic journalism and free "library-pass" access to civic information for underserved communities.

A three-year operating budget and operation plan are available by contacting Bill Densmore, ITEGA founding executive director, at [wpdensmore@gmail.com](mailto:wpdensmore@gmail.com) or 617-448-6600.