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The Information Trust Exchange Governing Association

**Trust, identity, personalization,
content and user sharing for the news industry**

THREAT / OPPORTUNITY

News organizations face a looming crisis: without action, a Google-Facebook duopoly will gain control over news organizations' users. Data about where users go on the web, what they buy, whom they follow, what affiliations they choose, will all be held—and controlled -- by private technology companies.

The reason most users flock to these platforms is simple: They desire a simple, standard online experience. They want a single log-on that can work across multiple sources and platforms, and that can be personalized. The Facebook sign-in is a solution to a user problem — one that happens to benefit Facebook and hurts news outlets.

The way out of this crisis is to respond to user needs by building a common platform to manage user identity and enable single sign-on. The platform will meet producer needs by enabling producers to manage data exchange, share subscriptions, provide targeted ads and accept payments in a neutral, open marketplace.

A number of entities are working on such a platform, but miss one significant point: If that common platform is controlled by a single for-profit entity, then it will, at best, simply replace Facebook as the new tollgate for end users and producers.

The only viable solution for news organizations to maintain control of their end users — and the only solution that also works for those end-users — is the development of a nonprofit platform that provides an open, competitive marketplace for users and news providers. The Information Trust Exchange Governing Association (ITEGA) [is that platform.](#)

ITEGA will create opportunities for network subscriptions, and help the public discover more trustworthy information relevant to their personal needs and interests. It will do so as neutral third-party with no motive except the public interest in an open web marketplace of information and ideas. Once running, ITEGA will be self-supporting with revenue from member and exchange fees.

Becoming a member of ITEGA is a first step to ending the duopoly lock on user identity and creating a neutral marketplace for digital content. Please contact Bill Densmore, ITEGA interim executive director, for more information. (1-617-448-6600) / wpdensmore@itega.org



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TRUST EXCHANGE
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**Identity, privacy, personalization and user sharing
for the news and information industries**

CHALLENGE:

- News organizations are losing control of their users to tech platforms; status quo fails
- Readers/viewers/users seek simple, standard experiences that work across multiple sources and platforms, yet can be personalized.
- A common platform to manage user identity, data exchange and payments could help
- But it must not be controlled by a single, for-profit entity that becomes a “tollgate” for its own account. Open, competitive market for users and service providers a must.

SOLUTION:

- Standardization for exchange of user log-in (and identity) attributes for single-sign-on, shared subscriptions and *transparent* ad targeting by universal ID format
- No interference with publishers’ current proprietary subscriptions
- Similar to ICANN, original Visa, EduRoam, standard-gauge railroads, standard-60-cycle AC, BlueTooth SIG.
- Information Trust Exchange Governing Association ([ITEGA](#)); California 501(c)(3) – similar to ICANN/Mozilla form. Public-benefit purpose: adopt, govern business and tech standards for sharing user data; lessen burdens on government to do so; promotes open, stable Internet. (see: [Articles of Organization](#) and [Bylaws](#)).

NEXT STEPS:

- Membership commitments from publishers, public media and digital news sites
- Support from foundations
- Collaboration with respected technology player(s) and trade associations
- Foster prototyping of federated authentication and user-data exchange services

RESULT:

- Move beyond platforms’ (Google/FB) *de facto* lock on user identity / privacy
- A neutral opportunity to be standards compliant (or face regulatory scrutiny?)
- Makes an open marketplace for digital content



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THE PROBLEMS WE SOLVE

- We have lost control of our online identity and privacy
- We have lost trust in online content and content providers
- Content providers are losing direct access to their users
- Content providers are losing the ability to earn revenue via advertising

HOW WE SOLVE THEM

- Champion and foster non-profit, public governance of identity exchange
- Gather publishers and new producers around common identity/privacy standards
- Enabling individuals to opt-in to controlled sharing of their identifying information with trusted content and service providers
- Enabling content providers to offer personalized information to those who opt-in
- Enabling content providers to form and share markets around these opted-in users

HOW EXCHANGE WILL WORK

- Shibboleth 2-based cross-site authentication plus standardized formats for exchanging privacy-by-design user attributes (network subscription, access rights, interests, payment auth).
- Identity services distributed among a plurality of providers
- User-data exchange “anonymizing” for cohort-based advertising

RESULTS POSSIBLE

- Uniform, user-centric identity / opt in privacy-by-design, intended to be EU compliant
- Option to develop or support small-payment aggregation services
- ITEGA membership required; competition on services, price, applications

OPERATIONAL STATUS

- ITEGA nonprofit corporation and initial board of directors in place
- Technical specifications developed by year-2015-6 task groups (40+ participants).
- Prototype user-data exchange now ready to operate
- News personalization application (in testing) is platform for user-interest discovery
- Major publisher has offered sites for prototyping
- Key nonprofit technology company assisting



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ITEGA AND PRIVACY

- End-third-party cookies
 - Opaque to users; identity “crumbs” all over Internet
 - Misappropriates proprietary value to ad-tech
 - Brands are frustrated; want alternative
- Stop “creepy” follow-me advertising
 - Elevate status and value of quality sites and environment
 - Built user-data exchange that ensures anonymous interest cohorts
 - Begin to think [“advisortising”](#)
- Get ahead of EU regulations impacting United States in April 2018
 - Disengage from paid-blocking and cookie-sharing
 - Prepare to offer value exchange for levels of privacy

How a news-industry trade group may be helping regulators (and the ITE) to support quality and privacy:

<https://informationtrust.wordpress.com/2017/01/04/how-a-news-industry-trade-group-may-be-helping-regulators-and-the-ite-to-support-quality-and-privacy/>



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BENEFITS TO NEWS ORGANIZATIONS

- Enable joint action and “multihoming” – mitigating the rise of “hub power” (*see Tim Wu, at right*)
- Marketplace operating standards without collusion (like airlines and FAA flight rules; ICANN and domain addressing)
- Opportunity to sell content on a bundled or per-item basis to non-local subscribers
- Improve relevance and value of advertising through deeper knowledge about user interests and preferences.
- Aggregate proprietary users into anonymous interest cohorts available to advertisers
- Better serve “drive by” users by gaining basic information about their origin and differentiating access.
- More easily establish trackable sharing of content and users with other publishers
- More flexible control over access to premium content by designated users
- Transparent governance of user identity, privacy and payment standards
- Alignment with networks of minimum-certified, “accountable” publishers

RELATED LINKS

- [Challenge, solution, next steps, result](#)
- [Functional roles of ITEGA and its members](#)
- [Executive summary \(2 pages\), and launch plan \(55 pages\)](#)
- [Index to ALL linked documents](#)

A one-pass for everything?

“I have a personal theory about traditional media, like newspaper and magazine sites, which is that they are crazy to go it alone and try to build their own little army. They should be more focused on getting readers to subscribe to a one-pass for everything that’s worth reading before Facebook essentially does this for them.”

- *Tim Wu, in an Oct., 2016 [Atlantic interview](#) about his book, *The Attention Merchants*.*

Hub action best defense against dominant hubs?

See “Managing our Hub Economy,” by Marco Iansiti and Karim R. Lakhani, (Harvard Business Review, Sept. 2017) to learn how the rise of tech plat-forms is skewing value capture away from traditional firms; authors suggest multiple hubs in each sector, advising that “[c]ollective action can also restructure economic networks” and “other stakeholders need to work together to ensure hubs look after interests of all network members.” They add: “[I]ndeed, strategic joint action by companies that are not hubs may be the best competitive antidote to the rising power of hub firms.”

- *Accessed Oct. 2, 2017 from: <https://hbr.org/2017/09/managing-our-hub-economy>*



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**BUILDING ITEGA:
STANDARDS, GOVERNANCE, PROTOTYPING**

- A neutral forum for Internet stakeholders to develop and implement business rules and shared technology protocols – standards to protect privacy, manage identity, foster trust and facilitate the exchange of value on the web.
- Network 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.

([diagram](#))

A minimum-viable proof-of-concept demonstration (under construction) includes the following:

1. Creating and storing of standard user attributes on a distributed basis (at least two publishers involved)

*As just one example/method for obtaining user attributes:
LifeStream® content personalization*

2. The ability to exchange profiles in some fashion among and between publishers, "profile aggregators" and other publishers or advertisers/agencies
3. Authentication of a unique but anonymous user to information resources on multiple sites -- "EasyPass" for information
4. Logging of user activity
5. Hooks that demonstrate how payment and variable pricing (including subscription and per click) are enabled