MATTERS OF TRUST:

How ITEGA can change a market that's failing journalism and democracy

Most of the money which supported journalism that matters – advertising – is now going to Google and Facebook. More importantly, Google, FB, social-media platforms, personal data stores and ad-tech platforms now control most of the data about us. We don't. Publishers don't. Unless trustworthy publishers rekindle a 1-to-1, personal relationship with their users/readers/subscribers, they will have no business leverage at all.

The management of trust, identity, privacy and information commerce is wildly broken. We have a global choice to make: We can cede control of our privacy and identity to governments or to a few large tech platform companies that are guided by Wall Street because they were born in an IPO-driven world. The Information Trust Exchange Governing Association (ITEGA) offers a third way. Read our one-pager and Q-and-A.

NEWS TRUST

Since November, foundations and other donors have made exciting, groundbreaking commitments to fund investigative journalism and elevate the impact of truth-based information. These initiatives are helping (1) build capacity for the creation of national, impactful journalism, (2) differentiate and deprecate untrustworthy news that is not fact-based and (3) give the public a chance to assert some control over "internet-of-things" privacy.

Yet the underlying infrastructure that supported civic journalism for at least a half century – mass-market advertising – largely no longer benefits quality publishers. This constitutes a "market failure" for journalism and threatens to choke off information democracies need.

ITEGA's mission is to define, guide and govern a layer of Internet business rules and network protocols for sharing user authentication, profiles, adver-tising, subscription and copyright payments and billing – as ICANN does domain names. It will help:

- Users regain control over their privacy and identity
- Publishers improve the relevance and value of advertising
- Create platforms that could allow a "fast-pass for news" across the Internet.

ANOTHER KIND OF TRUST -- DISTRIBUTED

For all of this philanthropy to result in a sustainable future for the values, principles and purposes of journalism – in any forms – network infrastructure innovation is needed. Because there's another element of trust: It's distributed trust, the ability to authenticate and share user privacy preferences, identity attributes and payment options in an open, uniform way across the web in the same way domain-name service works so well. As you said then, it's time to get our act together and make it happen!

STEPPING UP TO THE PLATE

So the challenge is to create a trusted, public-benefit identity system for the web, and an open market for information that don't at the same time extinguish personal privacy. We can do so, but need your help.

What's needed are business rules and technical protocols defining a shared-user network for trust, identity, privacy and information commerce. They will enable applications empowering local news organizations to understand and personally service their readers, users, listeners and viewers. They will support mechanisms for rewarding journalists – with money – for trustworthy reporting per ethical codes and accountability to those codes.

We had thought an entrepreneurial company might be able to address this market failure. Instead, it needs to be not a company in the traditional sense, but a nonprofit consortium with a public agenda – ultimately global --, which *governs* and *enables* marketplaces for information, user identity and privacy. Because the tech "platforms" are private competitors none can elicit co-operation from others, as big as they are, and they can't do it collusively.

This insight is why the Reynolds Journalism Institute moved last year to help form the independent, nonprofit ITEGA. We did that in January, using the same corporate form (California public-benefit corporation) as ICANN and Mozilla. On July 18, the IRS granted us 501(c)(3) public-charity tax status. We have an initial five-member board that includes Scott O. Bradner, IETF [1] principal and Internet Society cofounder; John Taysom. ex-Reuters executive and British-based tech entrepreneur; and three people I'm sure you know – former CPI and NPR news exec Bill Buzenberg, The Media Consortium's Jo Ellen Green Kaiser (our board chair) and Linda K. (Fantin) Miller of American Public Media.

The Reynolds Journalism Institute (RJI) incubated ITEGA with a task-group process involving more than 45 people, five F2F meetings and many months of technology and governance planning and document writing. RJI's research effort over multiple years represents a high six-figure expenditure. Impetus came from the 2015 RJI white paper, "From Persona to Payment: A Status Report on the News Ecosystem, and a Challenge to Create the Next One," based on interviews with more than 85 news- and information-industry experts. (http://newshare.com/report.pdf)

MISSION AND TASKS

ITEGA aims 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 (*e.g.* Google, Facebook).   See our MISSION and LAUNCH LINKS.

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[1] -- Internet Engineering Task Force

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Our launch plan shows that ITEGA will not own or run any of the business operations involved in the creation or distribution of news or advertising. Rather it will create open, standard rules of the road for those operators – an "open market" for trustworthy digital-information exchange.

SUSTAINING JOURNALISM: PAYMENTS & PERSONALIZATION

Like ICANN,[2] the ITEGA after three years could become self-sustaining. By enabling digital content and ad-exchange payment services, its fee and member revenue could grow to support such things as grants for public-interest journalism, digital library-pass access grants and a "Report for America" initiative.

Prototyping of one application of an ITEGA ecosystem – news personalization -- is beginning in collaboration with a few New England-based publishers. A launch focus is the identification and advancement of other initiatives and technologies that could fit within the ITEGA ecosystem.

To learn about options for joining ITEGA as a founding member, to collaborate or suggest other support, please contact Bill Densmore, executive director, at (01) 617-448-6600 or wpdensmore@itega.org

LAUNCH LINKS:
http://newshare.com/wiki/index.php/Itega
https://informationtrust.wordpress.com/join/

EMBEDDED LINKS:

http://informationtrust.wordpress.com/mission
http://newshare.com/itega-launch/itega-ONE-PAGER.pdf
http://newshare.com/itega1/itega-q-and-a-revised-05-26-17.pdf
http://newshare.com/itega-launch/itega-executive-summary-launch-plan-04-14-17.pdf
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http://newshare.com/wiki/index.php/Itega
http://newshare.com/wiki/index.php/Itega-launch (DRAFT)

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[2] -- The Internet Corp. for Assigned Names and Numbers