

January 15, 2018

Dear Prospective Member:

I know you've seen what I've seen. The big platforms – inadvertently or not – are creating problems for democracy and society with:

- Safe havens for “fake” news
- Secret surveillance software that jeopardizes our privacy
- Algorithms that lock us into one point of view

The way Internet technology is evolving, we are losing control over our personal privacy and identity. We are losing faith in the content we are served. And we are losing the local reporting we trust as news organizations can't compete with platforms. And up to [\\$16 billion in ad fraud](#) is siphoning off revenue from legit news sites.

We need to take back our privacy and identity from these platforms. We need an alternative marketplace in which the news organizations we trust can bring us the facts we most want and need. Quality journalism we appreciate should be easy to find and pay for.

The solution is [ITEGA.ORG](#), the Information Trust Exchange Governing Association. But it needs your support RIGHT NOW if we're going to make ITEGA a reality.

ITEGA is an international, non-governmental, non-profit – a 501(c)3 entity that will protect privacy, manage identity, foster trust and facilitate the exchange of value on the web. Incubated by the Donald W. Reynolds Journalism Institute, ITEGA is the result of years of research and meetings involving hundreds of people and more than 40 advisors and task-group members.

Will you consider making a tax-deductible donation today?

*“Managing identity and privacy for the public is an important unmet challenge,” says Douglas K. Smith, executive director of Columbia Journalism School's Sulzberger Executive Leadership Program.*

*“There is no institution better positioned than local news organizations to provide this service to the public in the context of a trusted third party like ITEGA,” he says. “I hope it happens.”*

## HOW IT WORKS

ITEGA will work in two ways, providing:

- 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.

**Infotrust  
eXchange**

[itega.org](http://itega.org)

### DIRECTORS:

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\* -- Founding Members

[Itega.org](http://Itega.org)

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ITEGA is a third way between innovation-stifling government regulation, and near-monopoly dominance by private technology platform companies who answer primarily to Wall Street investors.

## WHY NOW?

I'm sure you agree that there's an urgent need for ITEGA – a champion for identity and privacy protection that can:

- Give the public more choice about who to trust with their digital identity
- Help media organizations to collaborate on “rules of the road” while remaining competitive on price, service and perspectives.
- Create an opportunity for a “fast-pass” for information – a new approach to sustaining the values, principles and purposes of journalism.

As far as we've come, we will be stopped without financial support from those who “get it”. We can't give up now. Your tax-deductible donation of \$1,000 or more is critical for us to continue development of:

- An open, federated identity network the enables user choice
- A user-data exchange that is designed from the start to protect privacy
- New network-payment services for supporting quality news and information

As an individual “ITEGA Champion,” (\$1,000 or more) the benefits you will receive include:

- An invitation for you or your designee to attend our founding-member conference, “Beyond Platforms: Making the Market for Digital Identity and Information,” in April in New York (exact date TBD).
- Listing as a “Founding Member,” on our web pages and documents
- Invitations and access to unpublicized web and face-to-face events.

Local news organizations around the country are already dying. Without your help now, we will witness the extinction of entire sectors of the news ecosystem. We can't give up now. Please give us your support so that we can launch this alternative to the big platforms.

Become an ITEGA donor-member now. You can mail a check to the address below, or use Venmo (“itega account”). To use a credit/debit card, email or call 617-448-6600 with your pledge amount and we'll email you a donor confirmation for secure online payment. ITEGA is a 501(c)(3) organization and your contribution will be tax deductible to the maximum extent of U.S. law. We will also acknowledge your contribution in writing. Questions? Please email ([wpdensmore@itega.org](mailto:wpdensmore@itega.org)),s call 617-448-6600 or use our web form: <http://www.itega.org/yes> (password: “private”)

With Thanks,



Executive Director  
Information Trust Exchange Governing Association

P.S. --- For background, you may read [“The Case for ITEGA – and for Your Support.”](#) attached. For one-pager details of how ITEGA will serve the news ecosystem click [HERE](#).

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# THE CASE FOR ITEGA – AND FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Efforts to create a platform to help people manage their privacy and identity – and to quickly and easily find (and pay for) content customized to their needs -- have missed a key point: If the common platform is controlled by a single for-profit entity, it will, at best, simply displace Facebook or Google as a looming *Big Brother*-style tollgate controlling end users and publishers.

The Information Trust Exchange Governing Association, a new 501(c)(3) nonprofit, will create opportunities for network subscriptions, and help the public – people like you -- to more easily discover and access quality information relevant to their personal needs and interests. It will do so as a neutral, Swiss-like third party devoted to the public interest in fostering a privacy-by-design, open web marketplace for information and ideas.

*" . . . [T]here are simply too many pixels firing on a page every time that page is loaded and the lion's share of those pixels have to do in some way with tracking the user. The desired solution to that problem is an identity that has governance on the back end." -- [David M. Kohl](#), president/CEO, [TrustX](#) (quality-publisher non-profit ad exchange)*

## MANAGING IDENTITY, NOT ADDRESS

The folks who developed Internet protocols a half-century ago established a system for managing the *addresses* of machines and websites. That “domain name” address system is now governed by a nonprofit organization -- The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN). What Internet founders didn't enact was a standard system for identifying the *people* using the Internet – a system that could help vouch for levels of authority and trustworthiness of individual users – without necessarily compromising their privacy. So today, a variety of systems are used to “track” us as we move about the web. No one knows fully who is collecting what about us and how it is used. [In April 2018, European Union law may make such tracking illegal.](#) But without open, standardized methods for managing identity, it's difficult to provide customized services or network payment accounts across web services. The result of the current systems:

- News and other information providers are left in “silos.”
- We all maintain dozens of passwords and accounts.
- We all spend a lot of time searching and surfing for news and information because assembling the kind of interest-specific customized content packages we need and want is stymied by the lack of user-identity -- or privacy -- standards.

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- As a result, opaque private judgments and algorithms filter our information, and bits and pieces of our “identity” are spread across the web without our knowledge or control.

Rather than government regulation, will you help to establish a non-profit governance entity for managing privacy, identity, federated trust and information payments, similar to the way ICANN manages internet addresses and routing?

## ONE KIND OF TRUST -- CONTENT

In response to the rise of polarized media and “fake news,” foundations and donors have made exciting, groundbreaking commitments to fund investigative journalism and to elevate truth-based information, including the new News Integrity Initiative and the Trust Project. The Center for Public Integrity, Center for Investigative Reporting, the Sunlight Foundation and FactCheck are among organizations working on the sustain-quality-journalism challenge. 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.

## ANOTHER KIND OF TRUST -- DISTRIBUTED

But there’s another element of trust ITEGA is focused on. Internet pioneer Craig Newmark described it in a 2010 interview with Matthew Ingram as a “next big thing.” He called it distributed trust, the ability to authenticate and share web user privacy preferences, identity attributes and payment in an open, uniform way – akin to what ICANN’s service does well for addresses. The executive chairman of Google’s corporate parent, Eric Schmidt, recognized this in 2011, when he said:

“[I] dentity is incredibly useful because in the online world, you need to know who you’re dealing with. Historically on the Internet, such fundamental services are not owned by a single company.”<sup>1</sup>.

What’s needed are shared-user networks that ensures trust, prioritize privacy, protect identities and foster robust information commerce. This would enable applications empowering local news organizations to understand and personalize services to their readers, users, listeners and viewers. And, they would make life easier for organizations that wish to reward journalists – with money – for high-quality, face-based, accountable reporting.

ITEGA 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.

Managing identity and privacy for the public is an important unmet challenge, says Douglas K. Smith, executive director of Columbia Journalism School’s Sulzberger Executive Leadership Program. “There is no institution better positioned than local news organizations to provide this service to the public in the context of a trusted third party like ITEGA,” he says. “I hope it happens.”

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<sup>1</sup> -- Eric Schmidt, interviewed by All Things Digital’s John Paczkowski, as quoted in June 1, 2011 blog post: “Web would benefit from identity service not ‘owned by a single company’ says Google chairman. Accessed at: <https://informationvalet.wordpress.com/2011/06/01/web-would-benefit-from-identity-service-not-owned-by-a-single-company-says-google-chairman/>

ITEGA will not own or run business operations involved in the creation or distribution of news or advertising. Rather it will create standard rules of the road for those operators – an “open market” for trustworthy digital-info exchange. 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](#).

## TWO YEARS OF FUNDING SUPPORT

We're asking foundations, corporations and individuals to support two years of operations to reach sustainability as a member-guided and funded governance, standard setting and accrediting organization. Together, our challenge is to create a trusted identity system for the web that respects personal privacy and makes a “fast pass for information” possible. ITEGA wants to make that happen. Over the last two years, dozens of journalists, engineers, scholars and citizens have helped to design ITEGA’s identity and payments frameworks. But to fulfill its promise we need broad-based participation from those who care about journalism that matters.

## WORK NOW THAT NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT

The work ITEGA is already doing *right now* needs your immediate support:

- Guiding development of a privacy-by-design user-data-exchange prototype – to replace the system of third-party tracking “cookies” and identity “crumbs” all over the web.
- Designing a Shibboleth 2-based federated identity service that could allow a “fast pass for news” across quality information services.

To reach sustainability we are looking to corporate founding members and foundations who share our vision for a neutral, third party devoted to fostering a privacy-by-design, open web marketplace for information and ideas. Like ICANN, the ITEGA after three years should become self-sustaining. By enabling digital content and ad-exchange payment services, its fee and member revenue could support such things as:

- Grants for non-profit, professional, public-interest journalism
- Digital library-pass access grants to promote literacy and inclusion and
- A [“Report for America”](#)-style initiative supporting participatory media

Please become an ITEGA Founding Mmber now. You can mail a check to the address below, use Venmo (“itega account”) or call to arrange for credit-card use. ITEGA is a 501(c)(3) organization and your contribution will be tax deductible to the maximum extent of U.S. law. We will of course acknowledge your contribution promptly in writing. Questions? Please email ([wpdensmore@itega.org](mailto:wpdensmore@itega.org)) or call. Or use our online form at: <http://www.itega.org/yes> (password: “private”)

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# MEMBERSHIP information

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- Create an opportunity for a “fast-pass” for information – a new approach to sustaining the values, principles and purposes of journalism.

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- A [“Report for America”](#)-style initiative supporting participatory media

You tax-deductible donation of \$1,000 or more now will help us accelerate testing of :

- An open, federated identity network
- A user-data exchange that is designed from the start to protect privacy
- New network-payment services for supporting quality news and information

## INDIVIDUAL MEMBER

As an individual “ITEGA Champion,” (\$1,000 gift or more) donor the benefits you will receive include:

- An invitation for you or your designee to attend our founding-member gathering, “Beyond Platforms: Making the Market for Digital Identity and Information,” in April in New York.
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# CORPORATE / FOUNDATION MEMBER

## Key Founding Member Privileges (\$25,000)

- Observer status to the ITEGA Board of Directors for up to five years.
- Membership in one ITEGA Working Group of your choice for a three-year term
- Lifetime Founding Member status for one association or publisher group
- Membership in the ITEGA Advisors Council for up to five years
  
- An annual consultation with ITEGA leadership for up to three years
- Invitations to all ITEGA member functions.
- Listing as a Founding Member in ITEGA web services and publications

## Lead Founding Member Privileges (\$10,000):

- Lifetime Founding Member status for one publisher group
- Membership in the ITEGA Advisors Council for up to five years
- An annual consultation with ITEGA leadership for up to three years
- Invitations to all ITEGA member functions.
- Listing as a Founding Member in ITEGA web services and publications

## Supporting Founding Member Privileges (\$2,000)

- Invitations to all ITEGA member functions.
- Listing as a Founding Member in ITEGA web services and publications

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For details on how ITEGA will server various sectors of the news ecosystem go to:  
<http://newshare.com/itega-launch/itega-ONE-PAGERS-11-15-17.pdf>

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