

The Self Sovereign Identity Revolution will Not be B2B

Thursday 20D

Convener: Adrian Gropper

Notes-taker(s):

Discussion notes, key understandings, outstanding questions, observations, and, if appropriate to this discussion: action items, next steps:

The Zoom [chat](#) for this session is really good. Look below the outline:

- **Public Blockchain Inspiration applied to SSI**
- A single name as a communication control handle
- Organizations are the gatekeepers of digital trust and we're stuck with the model they will accept - organizations first - Issuer / Holder / Verifier model first
- Wallets can be coercive as in ankle bracelets for every kind of credential
- **Communities can dominate instead of enterprises**
- Get a popular P2P tool first and then business will add on
- **SSI conversation has been 90% about companies and what they do**
- SSI has to work for individuals first - "I take one look and I want it"
- SSI fails as a marketing message - it's a social and societal problem - NGOs and popular orgs are our hope
- Incentives are a challenge - SSI is not in the interest of the sovereigns - social and political challenge -
- Institutional (bank) fears that the wallet will go to the OS - the wallet is a touchpoint with the customer and the companies lose (Google Apple Exposure Notification example)
- Sign In with ETH as a race to the bottom for wallet user experience - no API for policy management
- Is this an adversarial issue (facebook? example)
- Does Trust over IP have to be reconstituted to have a broader base of participants
- What kind of "space" is the online space? It's overwhelmingly corporate (not like home or community)
- **SSI needs to be like cash - we all know how it works** - it's not complicated - can be good for enterprise
- Facial recognition with SSI?
- If we can be in a Person 2 Person way instead of the platform way - Rohan's Modern Markets - too much concentrated power -
- Need communities to connect with each other directly
- Standards are not that important
- But what about regulatory capture? Communities can't do much about that - use the farmers market model - local currencies
- **Can regulations help us?** - Is there a way for SSI to leverage government? Wingham Rowan identifies what "modern markets". are in this video.
<https://vimeo.com/showcase/8884996/video/620052773>
- Coop examples as good regulation in credit unions, mutual insurance, some electric utilities
- Joyce's point about trying to build something on a community level rather than a global scale reminds me of the notion of SSI Assurance Communities as introduced in this article:

- https://www.researchgate.net/publication/348325716_Decentralized_SSI_Governance_the_missing_link_in_automating_business_decisions
 - Medical regulation as a model - balance between FDA central and MD licensure distributed
 - Is GDPR enough? No because federated learning is the real societal issue
 - Can associations play a foundational role? Let's get the existing communities to build stuff in their own self-interest
 - **How would the broader social justice community understand SSI** - values of self-determination - choice - step back from SSI - it's a piece of a bigger issue
 - Heinz vonFoerster's "Ethical Imperative"
 - Control over trust - how?
 - Need reputation work in the SSI community context
 - How does reputation work in the real world? Gather information about the other... Figure out a way to do this at scale in the digital world? We're going the wrong way in the digital world
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The chat for this session is really good:

ZOOM CHAT:

10:34:05 From Adrian Gropper to Everyone :

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1TdpExrGc_98akMmKV3P1Ac5_DmX1EAlaOLdrpSP5VQc/edit

10:40:00 From @PrivacyCDN to Everyone : Is there a URL where the objections to the DID spec are written?

10:40:26 From Mike Parkhill to Everyone : I just found this news article:

<https://itega.org/2021/09/24/why-mozilla-is-opposing-user-control-over-identity-billionaire-kicks-off-effort-to-challenge-social-networks-with-distributed-identity/>

10:41:01 From Steve Todd to Everyone : @PrivacyCDN see the notes from yesterday's session:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/17nhNNImluaElKsCI9AMWixra5cfl1HDFOKgQVxsUt6l/edit>

10:41:36 From dsearls to Everyone : To me SSI should be about self sovereignty. More than 90% of the conversation I hear about it, however, has been about what businesses do, or do with each other. Which is fine, as far as it goes. But to succeed it has to work for muggles in a way they understand. And I see relatively little talk about that.

10:47:46 From Mike Varley to Everyone : Here is the link to the forma DID objection:

<https://lists.w3.org/Archives/Public/public-new-work/2021Sep/0000.html>

10:50:45 From @PrivacyCDN to Everyone : Thanks @Mike and @Steve

10:50:51 From dsearls to Everyone : To me saying SSI should start only with organizations is like saying personal computing should have started with mainframes, or browsers should have started with servers. If you leave personal things up to organizations, you have a different personal silo for every one of those organizations. That's what happened to CRM—customer relationship management. It was meant to be a way all orgs could relate to all customers. Instead it became, as a B2B thing, a way for every company to relate to customers in their own special way. And that ended up sucking.

10:51:17 From Marc Davis to Everyone : +1 Doc

10:51:40 From @PrivacyCDN to Everyone : Noting that we don't own software, including wallets.

10:52:11 From Marc Davis to Everyone : A wallet per organization seems a likely outcome of letting organizations control wallets.

10:52:40 From Timothy Ruff to Everyone : Reminds me of the early internet, when every organization thought they had to have their own browser, too...

10:53:00 From @PrivacyCDN to Everyone : I suspect that the best (?) we can hope for is a single wallet per device we carry.

10:54:27 From Chris Matichuk to Everyone : If wallet moves to single wallet, I could see this becoming an OS component, or part of the top authenticator apps. Doesn't the MS Authenticator already have support for VCs?

10:55:13 From Alan Karp to Everyone : I don't think that's viable. How would I interact with the same organization from two devices?

10:55:27 From Timothy Ruff to Everyone : Until there's a business model of giving to consumers what most of them will expect to be free, we are stuck with business models that incentivize organizations to move to an issue-hold-verify model, which plants the seeds for SSI

10:56:03 From Timothy Ruff to Everyone : Gotta run... thanks for the useful convo, all... :)

10:57:37 From Mike Ebert to Everyone : +1 to incentives, both for Bs and Cs

10:57:46 From Fraser Edwards to Everyone : +1

10:58:27 From Mike Ebert to Everyone : There will need to be political, social, AND economic incentives

10:59:47 From @PrivacyCDN to Everyone : Historical sidetone: When the British Empire outlawed slavery, I've seen estimates that this cost the Empire 2% of GDP annually for decades. Sometimes doing the right thing can't depend on economic incentives.

11:00:19 From Marc Davis to Everyone : +1 @PrivacyCDN

11:01:06 From @PrivacyCDN to Adrian Gropper (Direct Message) : Noting that all the speakers so far have been male and white. Any chance of eliciting other points of view?

11:01:14 From Marc Davis to Everyone : @MikeEbert agreed, but economic incentives cannot be determinative of political and social freedoms or we live in a system of digital feudalism.

11:01:39 From Mike Ebert to Everyone : True, you can't rely solely on economic incentives, but I think in this case there are some that can be used as a carrot (instead of just using sticks) to move businesses along

11:01:41 From dsearls to Everyone : I think calling self-sovereignty a social and political question is true, but it's not the only one. My pants, my car, the wallet in my pocket, are all personal things that I operate in a self-sovereign way. We need the way we present credentials to be simple and organic. Whether it's something which, like the touch feature of credit cards, works simply and seamlessly, that would be fine.

11:01:42 From Alan Karp to Everyone : But there are longer term benefits. There are big local economic losses when a military base closes, but a decade later the local economy is far better than it was when the base was open.

11:03:16 From Marc Davis to Everyone : @Mike and @Doc ultimately it's about power and control and the individual and groups vs. corporate and state power. The economy is a key and unavoidable element of that power struggle.

11:03:38 From TelegramSam to Everyone : I believe Timothy's view is a result of over focus on credentials (the *about*) instead of connection (the *with*)

11:04:09 From Joyce Searls to Everyone : Dave Husby is doing a session next on this topic that he just posted "We're building digital gates to keep people out" Breakout room I

11:04:28 From Mike Varley to Everyone : +1 Chris, totally understand that struggle.

11:05:32 From Joachim to Everyone : ENS Ethereum Naming System

11:05:48 From @PrivacyCDN to Everyone : Thanks for the convo. Doing the butterfly thing today.

11:06:07 From Alan Karp to Everyone : @TelegramSam: Can you elaborate?

11:09:50 From Steve Todd to Everyone : However, regulation generally just benefits the incumbents.

11:11:47 From TelegramSam to Everyone : Credentials are centered in orgs as the issuers

11:11:52 From dsearls to Everyone : I think some times and in some ways, the interests of businesses, large as well as small, are (or can be) aligned. By that I mean we all agree to speak the same language, drive on the right (or the left), and behave in polite ways with each other. This is not to say that large

companies, or most of them, will abuse their powers. What I'm saying is that SSI, if it works well and simply, doesn't have to be about anybody screwing anybody else. And frankly, I think individual self-sovereignty does work for some companies. Trader Joe's, for example, succeeds by going out of its way to NOT do game-the-customer marketing as usual, and derives the benefit of minimized cognitive and operational overhead.

11:11:57 From TelegramSam to Everyone : But SSI can be about more than just what other say about us.

11:12:34 From TelegramSam to Everyone : we need to do better connecting people with people and people with businesses, not from a VC perspective, but from an interactive perspective.

11:12:44 From TelegramSam to Everyone : @Alan^

11:13:26 From Alan Karp to Everyone : @TelegramSam: Agree. That's why I try to bootstrap adoption with person to person.

11:13:32 From Mike Ebert to Everyone : ^^^ The interactions can be a way to show the organizations involved that this is good for them, too

11:13:47 From Alan Karp to Everyone : I haven't used cash in months.

11:13:47 From TelegramSam to Everyone : Funding is hard with that, but the spread can be quicker.

11:14:34 From Alan Karp to Everyone : Trying to show the business case to HP (where I was working) is what killed our project.

11:15:12 From Mike Ebert to Everyone : Meaning things were running along smoothly until you told them it made business sense?

11:15:46 From Alan Karp to Everyone : They wanted returns in the next quarter, not 2 or 3 years out.

11:17:37 From Mike Ebert to Everyone : Yeah, that's a problem with business incentives, isn't it... is there a next-quarter return to SSI?

11:20:33 From dsearls to Everyone : @Mike, until it becomes obvious to a business that SSI is just a better way to do things, it won't happen. It will be like we saw with PCs, LANs, the Internet, and smartphones. All were seen as costly threats, before they became obvious necessities.

11:20:36 From Marc Davis to Everyone : What if we looked both to peer to peer for individuals as Joyce and Sam are saying and NGOs, trade unions, and credit unions?

11:21:10 From TelegramSam to Everyone : I believe both work together Marc.

11:21:27 From TelegramSam to Everyone : The hard part is the economics of development.

11:21:44 From Marc Davis to Everyone : @Doc totally agree, but will most of these businesses support true self-sovereignty for individuals?

11:21:58 From Marc Davis to Everyone : @Sam agreed!

11:22:40 From Mike Ebert to Everyone : @dsearls Agreed, I would love to find a way to prove to orgs that SSI is better ASAP.

11:23:42 From Marc Davis to Everyone : If self-sovereignty is something we must first convince corporations to give us, I think we will not achieve true self-sovereignty. The lords of the manor don't give all their serfs freedom.

11:24:58 From Mike Ebert to Everyone : I don't think it's dependent solely on convincing businesses, but it could speed things up or smooth things over if we can in parallel to other efforts.

11:25:13 From dsearls to Everyone : @Marc, they will if there are tools for the job—on both sides, but especially on the individuals' side. I don't see that yet, or much work on it, frankly. I have a Trinsic wallet for my phone, and nothing to use it with. Meanwhile Triassic on its website says—to business, not to me—"share data safely and instantly authenticate participants in your ecosystem, network, or marketplace." That tells me it's selling silos to companies.

11:25:45 From Joyce Searls to Everyone : This guy Wingham Rowan identifies what "modern markets" are in this video. <https://vimeo.com/showcase/8884996/video/620052773>

11:28:16 From Marc Davis to Everyone : @Doc I actually believe in a virtuous economy of self-sovereigns based on your ideas Doc. The question I am asking is how we get there. My fear is that the current

political and economic order has incentives that work directly against individual shaving self-sovereignty and that a purely corporate path for adoption is based on an inherent tension in our current political economy, which would agree for alternate adoption strategies for self-sovereigns to assert and gain power.

11:28:48 From Marc Davis to Everyone : Typo: which would argue for

11:29:33 From dsearls to Everyone : @Marc, it's the innovator's dilemma. No innovator (an incumbent market leader) wants to do anything that threatens to disrupt itself, even if it can see the logic of it. The job is up to the disruptors. Who is disrupting here, and how?

11:30:14 From Peter Langenkamp to Everyone : Joyce's point about trying to build something on a community level rather than a global scale reminds me of the notion of SSI Assurance Communities as introduced in this article:

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/348325716_Decentralized_SSI_Governance_the_missing_link_in_automating_business_decisions

11:31:22 From Alan Karp to Everyone : We got HP to disrupt itself by making the argument, "If we don't do this, someone else will do it to us." That got us funded and into the market. Unfortunately, they shut down the product group 3 years later.

11:31:29 From Marc Davis to Everyone : @Doc my question is if the innovation of SSI has to be in corporate space first, or if it requires other spaces in which to be nurtured and gain adoption and power (e.g., P2P, NGO, credit unions, alternate economic and political structures, etc.).

11:32:35 From dsearls to Everyone : @Marc, I don't disagree with that. I do fear that something will be lost when that innovation is done. And it will be what makes the individual truly self-sovereign.

11:33:22 From Mike Ebert to Everyone : Is pitting some bigs against the bigs (like or similar to what Alan said) a good strategy?

11:34:55 From Marc Davis to Everyone : @Doc is that "something that will be lost" the ability of self-sovereigns to truly assert and exercise economic power as individuals and groups?

11:34:58 From Joyce Searls to Everyone : If communities band together to use common infrastructure, the bigs will notice.

11:35:07 From Marc Davis to Everyone : +1 Joyce

11:39:18 From dsearls to Everyone : I submit that both the GDPR and the CCPA are bad regulations, and good examples of protecting yesterday from last Thursday. (GDPR protects 2015 from 2012.) What makes both bad is that it locates all significant agency on the corporate side. The GDPR assumes that the "natural person" is just a "data subject," and the processors and controllers of personal data are corporate entities. Also that privacy is a grace of those corporate entities' systems for providing privacy. It's totally fucked and has caused enormous inconvenience for everyone, with fatuous and insincere consent notices on websites that nudge visitors to "consent" to exactly what the regulation was meant to prevent. Plus a massive business in providing "GDPR compliance" that's all about screwing the spirit of the regulation while obeying its letter.

11:40:39 From Marc Davis to Everyone : I find it interesting that my question to the group of whether the interests of, and incentives for, self-sovereign individuals vs. corporations are aligned, or in conflict, in the current political-economic order has only been addressed by a few folks here. It seems to me to be a fundamental issue affecting the entire SSI effort.

11:40:41 From Brigitte Piniewski to Everyone : Thanks for the helpful details dsearls!

11:41:06 From Brigitte Piniewski to Everyone : Absolutely Marc

11:41:20 From dsearls to Everyone : The CCPA similarly demotes all of us to mere "consumers," who have rights only (or mostly) to insist that those who have stolen our data horses from our personal barns either return those horses, or not sell them in the horse market, in which we are not involved.

11:41:54 From dsearls to Everyone : Welcome, Brigitte.

11:42:20 From TelegramSam to Everyone : Marc, I'm not sure I know enough about it to say anything intelligent.

11:42:50 From Alan Karp to Everyone : People won't adopt SSI just for itself. They will adopt a tool that can only or most easily be built with SSI. The trick is coming up with that killer app.

11:43:05 From TelegramSam to Everyone : Agree Alan.

11:43:06 From dsearls to Everyone : Agree, @alan

11:43:14 From Neil Bourgeois to Everyone : +1 @alan

11:43:54 From Joyce Searls to Everyone : +1 Margot

11:46:26 From Timothy Ruff to Everyone : GLEIF meeting ended early. What'd I miss? :)

11:46:46 From Adrian Gropper to Everyone : look at the agenda document -

11:47:02 From Adrian Gropper to Everyone : it's a series of short bullets

11:47:25 From Marc Davis to Everyone : @TelegramSam, thank you for that Sam, but maybe you can think about this question: Do you believe that most corporations see their goals of profit and control as aligned with supporting the interests of individuals for self-sovereignty?

11:47:48 From Timothy Ruff to Everyone : @Adrian - Within this chat? Zoom erases all comments when people come into a meeting...

11:48:08 From Alan Karp to Everyone :
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1TdpExrGc_98akMmKV3P1Ac5_DmX1EAlaOLdrpSP5VQc/edit

11:48:30 From TelegramSam to Everyone : Session on Reputation on the schedule.

11:48:42 From Timothy Ruff to Everyone : Ah, of course. Thx!

11:51:15 From Timothy Ruff to Everyone : Can't have reliable reputation without first having secure attribution. Otherwise you end up with fake reviews, like what plagues Amazon. Also, negative reputation remains a thorny subject, as SSI holders have a negative incentive to share any negative info about them. This is why CRAs do what they do... someone has to capture the bad news.

11:52:23 From Marc Davis to Everyone : @TelegramSam, or in economic terms to use @Doc's excellent terminology and ideas, how many corporations in today's political economy truly believe that "free customers" will be more valuable to them than "captive customers"?

11:52:43 From Steve Todd to Everyone : Abuse of reputation is one of my biggest fears for the future.

11:52:47 From Mike Ebert to Everyone : We definitely want to be careful of unintended consequences.

11:53:11 From Mike Ebert to Everyone : Gotta run, thanks all!

11:54:33 From Marc Davis to Everyone : @TelegramSam I think my question can be framed another way: do you believe that asking corporations to grant individuals self-sovereignty is the best or right path to our achieving self-sovereignty?

11:55:26 From Timothy Ruff to Everyone : I do, by having corporations find a selfish reason to "give people their stuff". Incentives rule the world, we need to align them.

11:56:46 From TelegramSam to Everyone : BUT TRUST THE ALGORITHM!

11:57:39 From Marc Davis to Everyone : @TimothyRuff, I think this is the fundamental question. Strangely, I think in the case of self-sovereignty, too many companies are incentivized short term to act against their long term economic self-interest.