About Solid

Solid is a mid-course correction for the Web by its creator,
[Sir Tim Berners-Lee](team.md). It realizes Tim's original vision for the
Web as a medium for the secure, decentralized exchange of public
and private data.

Why fix the Web?

[INCLUDE PICTURE OF TIM]

The first web browser was also an editor. The idea being that not only could everyone read content on the web, but they could also help create it. It was to be a collaborative space for all mankind.

[INCLUDE LINK TO PLAY WITH ORIGINAL WEB BROWSER AT https://worldwideweb.cern.ch/]

However, when the first browser that popularized the web came along, called Mosaic, it included multimedia and editing was taken out. It was considered too difficult a problem. This change was the first curtailing of the web's promise and spawned an effort led by Tim and others to get the write functionality back. It was dubbed the 'read-write web' and led to Richard McManus' seminal article published in 2003.

The issue with writing data, as Wikipedia and others have learned, is that you need a degree of control over who can write what. That means you need to have permissions - what can individuals do to the data. And to have permissions you need to have a system for identity - a way of uniquely authenticating that an individual is who they purport to be.

Of course the social networks solved this problem within their own systems using their own specific identity and access control, but these were not standard, not interoperable, and gave you no choice in what applications you could use to access that data. You had to have your entire personal or professional life within one silo for it to work. And since the Web is ubiquitous, these silos exist across the data spectrum, from social and medical to financial and civil.

When your data is siloed away from you:

- You have little control over how it is used, or who is using it.
- You have little choice in which applications you can use to access it.
- It is hard to use as a cohesive unit, specifically because it is siloed, scattered across proprietary vendors, interfaces, and data formats.

All of these factors combine to make it very hard to access all of your own data, and put it to work on your behalf.

Why is Solid an Improvement?

Solid lets you bring your data together into a decentralized data store called a Pod. You control the data in your Pod. It is all stored and accessed using standard, open, and interoperable mediums. Any kind of information can be stored in a Solid pod. It is like a personal Web server for your data.

Solid lets you share slices of your data with the people, organizations, and applications you choose.

Because everything is interoperable, different applications can read and write the same data, instead of creating new data silos that make your data difficult to use in its entirety.

Consequently, you can do more with your data, because the applications you decide to use can be granted access to a wider and more diverse set of information. This lets them give you more value, without forcing you to relinquish control of what's yours.

How does Solid work?

A Solid Server hosts one or more Solid Pods, accessible via the [Solid Protocol](#TODO).

A pod hosted on a Solid Server is fully compartmentalized from any others. It has its own set of data and access rules, and is fully controlled by whoever it belongs to (i.e. you).

You decide where to host your Pod. You can opt to have it hosted for

you by an expanding network of [Pod Providers](#TODO), or you can [host it yourself](#TODO).

You can also have more than one pod, hosted in different places. This is effectively transparent to the applications and services you use, because your data, wherever it is hosted, or data that has been shared with you, is all linked through your [identity](#TODO).

You can store any kind of data in a Solid Pod, and you can determine who or what can access that data at a granular level, using the [Authentication](#TODO) and [Authorization](#TODO) systems included in the [Solid Protocol](#TODO).

The [linked data model](#linked-data-model) makes the data you store interoperable by using open, standard formats, that can be validated by the Solid Server to ensure data isn't corrupted by disparate applications.

This means that you can share select portions of your data with other people and groups you trust, or with an emerging ecosystem of applications and services, that can read and write data in your pod using [standard patterns for application interoperability](#TODO).