

Decentralised Identity and Governance Forum

Don has asked Giles Watkins and Andy Tobin to establish a new OIX forum to look at this issue:

If a decentralised identity scheme exists, where there is no single central point of control, how is trust established and maintained between participants?

Breaking News!

Decentralised Identity Already Exists

- We use it every single day.
- It's the physical credentials that we all have in our wallets, filing cabinets, and desk drawers.
- We can present these, in total privacy, to anyone we want, without the issuer knowing.
- Verifiers/Relying Parties make their own decisions on how to trust the credentials that we present.
- Nobody polices who can issue what data. Anyone can issue any data about anything at any time, to anyone.

BUT: physical credentials don't work well at a distance, especially in the digital world.

Using Digital Credentials Without a Centralised Authority

- The tendency has been to create central silos or hubs for digital data exchange, as there has been no other way to establish trust.
- Technology advances in distributed ledgers and decentralised computing mean it is now possible for parties to exchange digital credentials without needing a centralised gateway or hub or exchange.
- It is now possible to replicate in the digital world what is so simple and easy in the physical world, and with extra levels of certainty.
- This creates huge advantages in scale and flexibility.

Using Digital Credentials Without a Centralised Authority

It is now technically possible for a verifier/relying party to check;

- Who issued a digital credential to the presenter;
- That the presenter (or someone else) hasn't changed or edited it;
- That it was issued only to the presenter and nobody else;
- That it hasn't been revoked;

While only seeing the data they need to and nothing else (selective disclosure and zero knowledge proofs), and without ever needing to communicate with the issuer, and without a central hub/exchange/silo.

Exam Questions for the Forum:

In this new environment, how does a verifier/relying party:

- Know whether to trust the issuer of the credentials;
- Understand the processes the issuer used to onboard the identity owner;
- Understand how to trust the underlying network when there is no central “policeman”.

These are the questions that the Decentralised Identity and Governance Forum is being tasked with answering.

To get involved in the Forum:

Please email Sue Dawes to indicate interest.

Giles and Andy are working on the next level of detail for the Forum. We'll bring all interested parties together late February/early March to finalise the scope and officially launch the Forum.