EU Digital Identity

A Web 3.0 Strategy for Accelerating Europe's Digital Economy

The EU Digital Wallet - Opportunities and Challenges

As they announced here the EU is making progress towards the implementation of their Digital ID scheme.

The framework for a European digital identity (eID) aims to ensure universal access for people and businesses to secure and trustworthy electronic identification and authentication by means of a personal digital wallet on a mobile phone.

Opinions are mixed on whether this represents a positive or a negative development.

The EU writes that a personal digital wallet for EU citizens will make it easier for people to access public services and make online transactions. They provide this short intro, highlighting the benefits for SMEs through more secure and streamlined online commerce functions.

The Thales Group published this article which describes a compelling case for the scheme:

"For the first time, it establishes a reliable all-in-one identity gateway that puts citizens in full control of their data. For citizens and document issuers alike, the Digital ID Wallet, therefore, represents a missing piece in the jigsaw – a trusted environment in which innovative and exciting, user-focused ID initiatives can now realize their full potential."

In this European Internet Forum webinar they explore the Ingredients for Success, chaired by Lorena Bolx Alonso of the European Commission, with guests Andrus Ansip, Alban Feraud and Dr Jens Bender.

Challenges

In contrast there are starkly opposing views and criticisms of the scheme. France 24 ran this news piece where one side of the argument describes it as the stuff of Orwellian nightmares – a step towards mass surveillance and control.

Rob Rooken believes it is a Trojan Horse with the potential to change our lives and our society for the worst.

Dutch MP Freek Jansen poses some challenging questions to parliament where he raises sharp concerns about how the Digital ID would record all of our personal data in one central, online identity, acting as a prelude to a 'social credit system', in which all human transactions, movements and behaviours are tracked and assessed by the state. What role does the Netherlands play in this terrifying project, and what are the consequences for the Dutch population?

This report describes :

"In this commentary I illuminate how the core platform properties of digital identity systems afford the undue surveillance of vulnerable groups, leading users into the binary condition of either registering and being profiled, or giving up essential benefits from providers of development programmes."

Fears about government control and surveillance are widespread, with this tweet highlighting a typical response many people have to these types of systems:

they want us to use it to buy shopping and everything through it because your banking will be accessed through it and shops will no longer except cash or bank card they want all banking access to go through it, to enable the government filter to control all your daily spending...