



*(roundtable, Portland, Ore., 2017, at start of ITEGA task-group process)*

# Identity, Advertising and the Future of Journalism

## Webinar Preliminary Narrative

April 22, 2021

*(for executive summary and recommendations see [FINAL report](#))*

- [MORE ABOUT THE SERIES](#)
- [VIEW JAN. 7 PARTICIPANTS](#)
- [VIEW JAN. 21 PARTICIPANTS](#)
- [VIEW MARCH 4 PARTICIPANTS](#)

### KEYWORDS:

[advertising](#), [Events](#), [fiduciary](#), [identity](#), [network](#), [privacy](#), [Privacy Beat](#), [subscription](#), [technology](#), [data](#), [identity](#), [privacy](#), [technology](#), [trust](#)



A REPORT FROM:

[The Information Trust Exchange Governing Association](#)  
and The [Donald W. Reynolds Journalism Institute](#)



## BACKGROUND LANDSCAPE

Business and legislature responses to public concern over privacy, opaque data sharing and "tracking" are leading to a crossroads on the Internet during 2021 -- who will manage and authenticate elements of our personal identity?

More than two years of research by the [Information Trust Exchange Governing Association](#), culminating in three webinars bringing together experts have lead to the following conclusions:

- A stalemate among competing interests of marketers, publishers and technology companies is leaving the public with little ability to effectively manage or control personal information coursing through the business web.
- While the European Union took early action with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), progress in the United States is piecemeal and state-specific; and Congress remains divided. A solution imposed by the United States will not be global, anyway.
- The U.S. advertising-tech leadership has moved close to a partial solution, but has so far appeared unwilling to cede control of consumer identity authentication to a public-interest structure that could be global in impact and similar to the way Internet domain names are governed.
- Thus, there is an urgent need to develop consensus with leadership by a public-benefit entity with sufficient *gravitas* and resources.

## TASK-GROUP MEETINGS

ITEGA's research, funded by from [the Donald W. Reynolds Journalism institute](#), [Craig Newmark Philanthropies](#), Omidyar Network and others, comprised a series of task-group meetings, and 18 months of reporting and analyzing developments through a weekly [Privacy Beat](#) newsletter reaching more than 800 people.

## WHY NOW? THE ITEGA MISSION

In the wake of a presidential election rife with mis/disinformation, new data protection laws, marketplace shifts in digital advertising and digital identity, and the challenges facing news organizations, it's critical to connect the dots between digital systems and democracy, for the public, for journalists, and for Congress.

This series was part of ITEGA's [vision](#) to serve editors, researchers, technologists, entrepreneurs and journalism advocates taking on the task of making a new market for digital information — governed by a public-benefit consortium — and committed to respecting individual identity and privacy.

The ITEGA research culminated in three moderated public webinars: "[Identity, Advertising and the Future of Journalism](#)," which ran Jan. 7, Jan. 22 and March 4, 2021. They explored how digital systems impact democracy, and the path ahead for advertising, identity, privacy and journalism. Invited experts in local and national

journalism, advertising, digital identity, and privacy shared their experiences and ideas on helping:

- Chart and confirm the current landscape
- Explained the importance of “identity”
- Sampled solutions being worked on.

Goals were to:

- Explore how digital identity and privacy initiatives might support community engagement
- Facilitate trust around authentic identity
- Build revenue for publishers of all sizes.

ITEGA’s [mission](#) is to foster a shared-user network for trust, identity, privacy — and information commerce. Webinar participants from the programmatic advertising industry, public advocates, and an emerging open-tech initiative explained efforts that might advance ITEGA’s mission.

At the webinars’ outset, ITEGA posed this assertion to inspire conversation: “Surveillance capitalism will destroy the free market and democratic values, starting with privacy and an independent press, without the adoption of user-centric digital identities that are governed in the public interest.” Other convening questions are found at Appendix A.

**THE ASSERTION:**  
“Surveillance capitalism will destroy the free market and democratic values, starting with privacy and an independent press, without the adoption of user-centric digital identities that are governed in the public interest.”

“The next shoes to drop in the digital privacy and online advertising world will be, and already are, shaping, the future of journalism,” said Randy Picht, executive director of the RJI, at the Missouri School of Journalism. “And getting an understanding of the players and the behind-the-scenes issues that are driving these conversations is critical.”

#### NOT JUST ADVERTISING

Rules for privacy-safe exchange of user data, overseen by an independent third party rather than the big internet platforms or ad-tech companies, and the emergence of personal “information fiduciaries” could help restore public trust in the Internet, webinar participants were to told at the March 4 webinar.

In framing the three webinars, organizers were aware of many uncertainties about how advertising will operate to support web services,

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including journalism, as a result of privacy-related changes in the way the services of Apple and Google operate. Advertising remains critical to the future of journalism, but far from the only answer. Redoing the way the web and advertising handle identity is table stakes to better support for consumer privacy.

The three sessions were designed to: (1) Define the landscape affecting journalism, identity, privacy and advertising; the problems and opportunities. ([see account of Jan. 7 session](#)) (2) Begin to survey and hold up some possible solutions ([see account of Jan. 21 session](#)); and, now, hold up examples and seek more.

“I think we’ve seen that digital identity poses a lot of issues around privacy,” said Jo Ellen Kaiser, ITEGA’s board chair and the final webinar’s moderator. “But it also opens up a tremendous opportunity, not just for the revenue side, but also for us to really help people, use the internet more effectively — be able to kind of make their own pathways through the internet in a way that they feel is a lot more reassuring than what they have now.”

Discussants spoke of:

- A shift in control of elements of digital “identity” from big-tech platforms to individuals — perhaps assisted by news organizations or other agents — was among ideas discussed in the first of three webinars on Jan. 7.
- The [importance of privacy and identity](#) in digital advertising and publishing were [covered in the Jan. 21 session](#). The “open” Internet isn’t meeting the business or privacy needs of publishers or advertisers when compared with “walled garden” platforms such as Facebook, but efforts now underway could change that, according to participants.
- Possible solutions, such as rules for privacy-safe exchange of user data, overseen by an independent third party rather than the big internet platforms or ad-tech companies, and the emergence of personal “information fiduciaries.” These ideas, [covered March 4](#), were seen as helping restore public trust in the Internet.



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-- Jo Ellen Kaiser,  
ITEGA board chair

The third webinar, subtitled: “Blueprinting the Way for Journalism and Privacy,” focused on solution specifics.

**Joining the March 4 discussion** were a top executive of a digital-advertising technology company, The Trade Desk Inc., a leading web researcher for Consumer Reports, and a software engineer and former lawyer who specializes in developing “open-source” networks. Also included were heads of two small companies which help news organizations manage subscriptions and user data. The three webinars were organized by ITEGA with assistance from the Donald W. Reynolds Journalism Institute and Craig Newmark Philanthropies.

“I would like to think that the technology that we’re developing would allow publishers to to allow ad tech to provide some level of targeted ads without exposing identity,” said Richard Lerner, CEO of Clickshare Service Corp, one of the two small companies, adding: “In a way that they can tell their consumers: ‘Look you you don’t need to worry about it, we’re not allowing advertisers to track you across any sites outside of our network.’ “

#### KEY POINTS RAISED

Key points raised — but not settled — in the 75-minute discussion on March 4 ([READ TRANSCRIPT](#) or [WATCH VIDEO](#)) included:

- How to explore the impacts of trust, identity, privacy and revenue on diversity, equity and inclusion and on continuing to make sure the web benefits multiple publics broadly and globally.
- Whether the targeted-to-individuals advertising system dominating the Web for two decades is incompatible with privacy, and it is a form of “direct marketing” which should be de-emphasized or made illegal — without the user’s explicit agreement to participate.
- Whether emerging U.S. state or federal privacy laws should ban outright certain uses of consumer data without the user’s explicit permission. Outside of Europe, current laws default to allowing data use unless the consumer makes the effort to “opt-out.” Consumer Reports favors a ban.

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Bill Michels

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### COMPETING WITH “WALLED GARDENS”

Today, Google, Facebook, Apple and Amazon all offer “single-sign-on” identity services to their users, the effect of which is to allow them to track consumer behavior across wide swaths of the Internet and within what experts term their “walled gardens.”

Without a similar capability for independent advertising-technology services on the open web, news websites will wither, argued Bill Michels, general manager, product, at The Trade Desk, because brands want access to user preference data to serve “interested-based advertising.” He argued that the “walled garden” platforms would, without something like UID2, increase their already dominant share of web advertising.

“And if there’s not identity, and a safe way to do that, on the open Internet, all of those [advertiser] funds are just going to move to where it’s easiest to do it,” said Michels. “From a practical matter, if there is no identity on the open Internet, those sites will just go away. like there will be no newspapers.”

One public participant in the webinar, former ad-agency executive and current privacy advocate “Doc” Searls, countered that he thought Michel’s prediction was potentially inaccurate. That’s because quality-brand advertisers will want to find editorial “context” for their messages, Searls believes, rather than adopt what Searls called a “direct-marketing” approach of targeting ads with knowledge of an individual consumer’s behavior. “Trying to fix programmatic ad tech, which is tracking-based advertising, with anything that adapts from that model is not going to work,” Searls said. “The operators have way too much vested interest in it, there’s too much money in it. They are too in bed with it. And the worst part of it is approximately no publications are willing to grabe the third rail of their dependence on it.”

### HOW UID2 WOULD WORK FOR ADVERTISERS

**While participants in the system can track a unique individual across the web, they wouldn’t have any personal identifying information (PII) linking a real person — at least not via the UID2 system.**

Michels explained that UID2 will work by asking publishers to provide PreBid.org Inc. with email addresses of their subscribers, in what he characterized as “an explicit permission to use data.” The UID2 system will then encrypt the emails with a “hashing and salting” protocol so that, while participants in the system can track a unique individual across the web, they wouldn’t have any personal identifying information (PII) linking a real person — at least not via the UID2 system. Michels said authorized ad-industry participants in the system would be supplied with a decryption key allowing them to discover the embedded email address.

“So now, once it goes into there – and there are lots of other companies like The Trade Desk which are buying on those pipes – companies can then have the decryption key to

look at it and say, oh, cool, this is, **bill@gmail.com**,” Michels said. “And we have thousands of advertisers that are looking at all these opportunities, and they say, ‘Yep, based on what I know about him, I think I can make some informed decisions around which personalized ad to show.’ “

#### SOMEWHAT PERSISTENT IDENTITY — UDEX CLOUD COHORTS

A publisher could share (with a user’s permission) data about the user’s interests into a cloud-based service. The [UDEX.ORG](http://UDEX.ORG) protocol description has been [posted publicly](#) for more than five years by ITEGA.

If the identity can be shared and persists, how long before someone identifies it with a person using data from outside the UID2 system? Michels said the “hash” function is expected to rotate about every six months, meaning identity matching would have to be restarted after each change.

In another approach, Clickshare Service Corp. CEO Rick Lerner outlined a user-data-exchange ([UDEX.ORG](http://UDEX.ORG)) service that his company designed in 2016-2017 during his participation in ITEGA’s technology task-group meetings. According to [UDEX q-and-a](#), a publisher could share (with a user’s permission) data about the user’s interests into a cloud-



Richard Lerner

based service. The UDEX protocol description has been [posted publicly](#) for more than five years on ITEGA’s website. <sup>1</sup>

First the publisher would encrypt the user ID, the interest data would be used to assign the now-anonymized user to one or more “interest cohorts”. An advertiser could then query if a user is in a relevant interest cohort in the instant before deciding whether to serve a particular ad. The advertising networks would never learn the identity of the user, but they would receive a unique code when a user sees a particular ad so they can “frequency cap” and sequence subsequent views logically. The unique code would differ for each ad served and would be good for about a week.

#### GOOGLE WOULD CONTROL COHORTS IN BROWSER

Google Inc. has announced its intention to test a different approach to “cohort”-based [ad-targeting called “FLoC.”](#) The matching would occur inside the Chrome browser, which is owned and controlled by Google. By contrast, the UDEX.org proposal would be governed by a public nonprofit such as ITEGA.

“With the UDEX, ([diagram](#)) the notion is that each ad tech group gets a different identity ID for a person, largely those are different for different ad tech groups, and certainly

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<sup>1</sup> -- ITEGA’s founder, Bill Densmore, [was a founder](#) (and current stockholder) of Clickshare.

would be different for different networks. And they would be short lived,” Lerner explained, adding: “Doing some level of targeting of ads — ad tech tells us is important. And, maybe it is, but it certainly was the case that when you used to open up a magazine, you’d see ads without any expectation that those advertisers would know who you are.”

#### NEED FOR WATCHDOG IS ASSERTED

The need for a watchdog to make sure companies working with consumer privacy and identity are living up to ethical and business promises was emphasized by James Vasile, a former lawyer and current board member of the Electronic Frontier Foundation, who now co-heads a technology-development firm, Open Tech Strategies.

Open source is table stakes for trust, said Vasile. But there is a problem with knowing whether everyone is running the same technology on the server side. He said: “If you want to make promises, you have to offer something that is inspectable. Because as we’ve seen time and time again, every time somebody makes promises, but we don’t have third-party inspection, it always turns out that they were lying.”

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In an apparent reference to UID2, Vasile added: “And more to the point, no amount of open-source transparency, goodness is going to reassure people [when] you’ve given them some sort of tracking number that is going to follow them from website to website and allow anybody to build profiles of all their surfing activity. I don’t know anyone that would hear: ‘Build a profile of me it can get shared here, it can get shared there — but you have a lot of control over it. And we’ll use it to target advertising toward you.’ That is not the start of a conversation people want to have. That is the start of a conversation people want to escape from.”



James Vasile

#### INDUSTRY OWNERSHIP WITH THIRD-PARTY AUDITING?

Michaels, from The Trade Desk, responded that once browser makers stop supporting “third-party cookies” publishers are going to be in a “dire situation” unless they can have a conversation with their readers/viewers about tracking their activity to improve ad targeting. He said The Trade Desk was using a “flavor” of open source “that puts ownership out into the industry.” He said anyone will be able to transparently suggest changes.

Vasile agreed that an open-source approach was a piece of the puzzle, but that technology alone couldn’t assure that privacy and identity promises to the public are



met. “It’s a piece of the puzzle,” said Vasile. “But not without the oversight, without the governing authority or third-party auditing of who knows what.”

#### PRIVACY VS. PLATFORM COMPETITION

Michels was respectful and supportive of privacy-protecting measures, but worried about the competition. If publishers and ad-tech companies operating on the “open web” can continue to target users inside the “walled gardens” — but no longer do so outside on the open web. If that’s the case, he said, advertisers will spend more of their money in the walled gardens.

“Nike’s not gonna’ go, ‘Good for you. We’re still gonna’ give you half,’ said Michels. “They’re going to be: ‘Well that’s fascinating. Good luck.’ And they’re just gonna’ give all their money to three companies. And so the open web will think, ‘Yes. We did a bunch of things to make sure there’s absolutely no data sharing.’ And to what end? Because there will be nothing left. So . . . the money flows relative to where it can see the best return. And right now, it is a better experience to buy on Amazon, through Google, Facebook and a couple of other things. They will take that email data, they’ll load it up in Facebook and they will find you there . . . and that’s where the majority of their money will go — if there’s not an equivalent way to do that on the open web.”

#### HOLDING A KEY TO SHARED SUBSCRIPTIONS

The other small company in the webinar discussion, Creative Circle Media Solutions, is launching an effort to get news publishers to join a shared-user network in which a subscription account at one news site would provide access to many other news sites as well.

“We’ve been working to try to get interest developed for the existing payload vendors in the newspaper industry, to create a single sign on — something that would probably query, when you log in, you would tell them what you were logging in with,” said Creative Circle’s CEO, Bill Ostendorf. “And then it would query that database and let you in.” He said he was attracted to ITEGA “because someone would have to hold the key to this shared sign on. And so I have some hope here that we can advance this further . . . we have to have paywalls, and we have to have the ability to carry them around, it really would be a big deal . . . .”



“ . . . I want them to be able to take that login, and use it anywhere and have the *Washington Post* or the *Pawtucket [R.I.] Times* — somehow this person through — maybe a key that we supply with their login — to say: ‘Oh, this is a Creative Circle, person’ — and route the login to us and we’ll authenticate. So that’s pretty different than anything that’s out there right now and doesn’t really require us to share any information. It just requires somebody to look at that login as it’s happening, and pass it to the right vendor. And that way to the user, it’s transparent.”

#### THE NETWORK ‘TICKET’ — AND SUPERFUND

The shared-user subscription and a proposal for government-backed payments to fund journalism were presented as additional methods to support journalism beyond advertising technology.

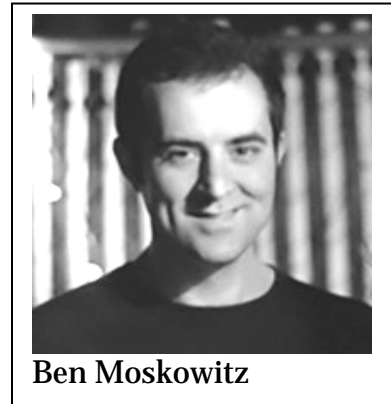
Kaiser, the ITEGA board chair, remarked that in her consulting with the [Tiny News Collective](#) and small digital news sites across the United States, some of them nonprofits, there is a desire to have a method to share and get credit for each other's content. "You could have back-end exchanges that are invisible to consumers, but that allow them to get all kinds of content with a login that they trust," Kaiser suggested.

The idea of providing some sort of government subsidy to U.S. news publishers was raised by Consumer Reports' Digital Labs director Ben Moskowitz. Loss of advertising has put current publishers under "terrific pressure" he said. He noted a proposal by the nonprofit think-tank [Public Knowledge](#) for a "superfund" for journalism.

### REGISTRATION FOR PAYMENT — NOT JUST AD TARGETTING

"I love the idea of the ticket — you can buy into a network of sites." said Moskowitz. "I love the idea of micropayments, I think. Just to speak for Consumer Reports for a second, we were one of the first sites to put up a paywall — it probably saved Consumer Reports, to be honest. . . . subscription businesses on the whole are really doing well."

Moskowitz said saving quality journalism and making free content monetize better (through targeted advertising) may be separate discussions, and agreeing to give up personal data shouldn't be the only way to be informed, although it can certainly be one way.



Linda Miller

"There is still quite a bit of trust in local news. And it's not quite being leveraged . . . it is not *able* to be leveraged because of the way the advertising system is now set up."

"But that said, as publishers do look at their options going forward, such as UID2 and hashed email, authentication-based systems, those registration-based systems are definitely one way of maintaining addressability," he said. "And that is not just like for cross-site data sharing. But it's also for the scenarios that get payment."

Brendan Riordan-Butterworth, a technical advisor to ITEGA who formerly worked for the IAB Tech Lab and Microsoft, joined the discussion to offer a summary of what he called four elements of a "cocktail" of options available to news publishers:

- The hashed-email base, like UID 2.0.
- Google's "put-personal-data-in the web browser" solution



- User data solicited by publishers directly from their own users
- Selling advertising merely based on adjacency to quality content — so-called “contextual” ads.

This prompted ITEGA [board member Linda Miller](#), a former newspaper and public-radio editor and executive, to remark: “There is still quite a bit of trust in local news. And it’s not quite being leveraged — or maybe the truth is, it’s more accurate to say it is not *able* to be leveraged because of the way the advertising system is now set up, and the way identity and data plays into that . . . But one of the carrots we have is trust. What if our users really trusted us with their identifying data . . . there are mission-based opportunities we could have.”

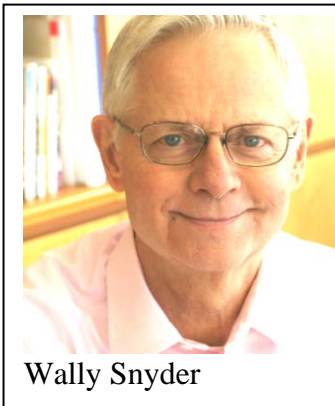
#### FINAL IDEA — THE CONSUMER DATA-TRUST AGENT

A final key idea of the session came from Moskowitz, the Consumer Reports researcher. He acknowledged that there will be “some surveillance-based content underwriting through advertising” which he said would not be a bad thing unless it were the only option for the public. He suggested the emergence of “trusted intermediaries” for the public could give the public the ability to bargain over data. CR is taking “baby steps” into the idea of becoming an intermediary, or “authorized agent” for consumers under the California Privacy Rights Act (CPRA).

Moskovitz suggested the emergence of “trusted intermediaries” for the public could give the public the ability to bargain over data. CR is taking “baby steps” into the idea of becoming an intermediary, or “authorized agent” for consumers . . . .

A consumer might say to such an agent, according to Moskowitz: “I’m going to trust you to go out and opt me out of the data, that’s not good for me, or to delete my data for data brokers basically take the actions, I don’t have the time or the wherewithal to do, but I implicitly trust you to do it for me.” Concluded Moskowitz: “It does seem like we’re about to enter a new moment where intermediaries is going to be part of the next wave of innovation, so to speak.”

#### PRIVACY, PUBLISHING AND AD TECH



Are today’s privacy laws helping or hurting publisher efforts to build engagement and trust with users? In the second webinar, moderated by Institute for Advertising Ethics founder Wally Snyder, ad-tech executives and publishers saw privacy/identity consumer choice as the only way to compete with the Facebook, Apple and Google “walled gardens.”

“There’s so much of this data [that] is collected,” said Snyder, a former U.S. Federal Trade Commission assistant director and CEO of the American Advertising Federation. “It’s not just sold once. It’s sold many times. So it becomes a very complex situation.”

Currently, the “open” Internet isn’t meeting the business or privacy needs of publishers or advertisers when compared with “walled garden” platforms such as Facebook, but efforts now underway could change that, according to the webinar participants.

From the remarks of their executives, it sounded as if advertising technologists believe the only way to compete with Facebook, YouTube and other technology platforms is for publishers to do two seemingly contradictory things — first, give users control over their privacy and use of data and then, be able to “address” them with targeted advertising as efficiently as Facebook claims to do. The current programmatic, real-time-bidding system, doesn’t do either, they said.



Travis Clinger:

**“We have to stand up as an advertising industry and acknowledge we messed up.”**

“We have to stand up as an advertising industry and acknowledge we messed up,” said [LiveRamp executive Travis Clinger](#). “We lost the trust of the consumer and we built a horribly inefficient ecosystem. The walled gardens focused on addressability.” He added: “As an industry we have to lean much more into the consumer privacy changes and be much more transparent to the consumer.”

Opaque consumer data collection and sharing, “breadcrumbs” of data spread across the web and shared with different parties have caused the public to lose some faith in aspects of digital advertising said Jordan Mitchell, SVP, consumer privacy, identity and data for the [IAB Tech Lab](#). He criticized unnamed browser makers (presumably Apple and Google) for a “dangerous” effort to “establish custody over the consumer” and making choices for them by changes in the way

browser handle user identity. “They are for-profit companies,” he said. Better to have what he called “predictable privacy” through open-web standards and consumer choice over which “first party” is going to help manage their data.



Jordan Mitchell

#### COMMUNAL GARDEN: “NEWSNEXT”?



Scott Cunningham

A consumer privacy law that requires a consumer’s opt-in to use his/her data is worrisome in the sense that it might be hard to get such permissions, said [Scott Cunningham](#), a consultant to the [Local Media Consortium](#) (LMC), a group of 90 U.S. publishers with thousands of websites with 200 million unique monthly visitors. LMC is seeking to assemble what Cunningham called “a communal garden around all the publishers in the United States.” Its working title is “NewsNext.” From a news perspective, said Cunningham, “I believed in the open web and in programmatic but it has not worked for news publishers. It just hasn’t. I mean It has been a

race to the bottom on the CPMs . . . News publishers can't actually function in a healthy way on the open web."

The NewsNext goal is to change that, he said, to consolidate the independent audiences of hundreds of publishing sites so that it can be addressed easily by advertisers, to encourage users to register with email addresses "and also to acquire consent where required and needed for advertising targeting." He added: "The news publishers are absolutely on board with wanting to take advantage of where the privacy direction is going."

Ad-tech companies like LiveRamp are "just middle-ware" in the first-party relationships that advertisers and publishers maintain," said Clinger. "We have to take ad tech and we have to step back and not be in control."

Ad-tech companies like LiveRamp are "just middleware" in the first-party relationships that advertisers and publishers maintain," said Clinger. "We have to take ad tech and we have to step back and not be in control." He said it should be easy for consumers to opt-out of personalized advertising, even if that means they have less access to "free" content as a result. [LiveRamp's Authenticated Traffic Solution\\_ \(ATS\)](#) for user tracking now logs in 1 in 5 Americans weekly he said. It's time to abandon the

third-party cookie and "other nefarious forms of targeting" otherwise, he said: "In five years there won't be an open internet if we don't improve this. We'll all be getting our information from Facebook and the other walled gardens."

"We need to have a legal framework that forces transparency and gives consumer control. It doesn't mean we shouldn't be able to use personal data .... We are in data driven world."  
-- Mathieu Roche

**Mathieu Roche**, CEO of British **user-identity management** firm **ID5**, acknowledged that privacy regulation is needed. "We need to have a legal framework that forces transparency and gives consumer control," he said. "It doesn't mean we shouldn't be able to use personal data .... We are in data driven world."

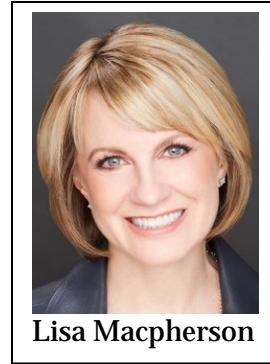


Cunningham said LMC's research finds that advertisers do want a way to address consumers with specific interests, and they also do not want to be accused of targeting consumers without permission. "A federal privacy law would actually help because it would mean everyone could operate on the same page from the news publishers in aggregate and how to expose that permissioned data to marketers who are looking for it at scale."

#### FACEBOOK PROBLEM – LACK OF AUDIT

To the assertion that Facebook is an effective advertising medium was added two caveats.

**Lisa Macpherson**, of the advocacy group Public Knowledge, said advertisers should be “asking hard questions about whether programmatic is working for them on any basis other than efficiency, because of ad fraud, and viewability and ad blockers and non-quality contexts for their brands.”



Clinger said Facebook’s performance is not audited by any third party, nor is the performance of Google advertising, which itself dominates add measurement. “This is a very big part of the problem altogether,” he said. “Brands invest because they believe it works because the platforms told them so.”

In the Jan. 7 webinar, Sally Hubbard of the Open Markets Institute had sounded a similar theme about the power of the “platforms” to hypertarget advertising and amplify disinformation. Relying on corporations to work against their own profit interests through self regulation won’t work, she said. “It’s way too much power and it’s a centralization of the Internet,” she said.

#### GOVERNANCE ENTITY SEEN AS NEEDED

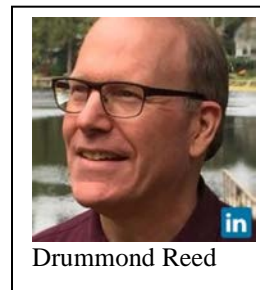
**A key component of the shift is a trusted party – government or nonprofit – that would be responsible for governing compliance with privacy and identity rules and the exchange of value, financial or otherwise, discussants heard. U.S. Rep. Bill Foster, D-Ill., bipartisan digital identity bill cosponsor, was among webinar participants.**



New laws or regulations may be necessary to make the shift because participants in the current advertising-supported Internet – including ad-tech companies as well as publishers who feel forced to do the bidding of Facebook and Google – will not change against their economic interest, said participants in the Jan. 7 webinar. A key question emerged: Is a government to enforce directly in the market, or could it also serve to guide and augment the work of public-benefit but private-sector governance?

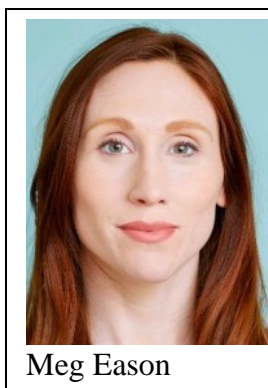
A shift in control of elements of digital “identity” from big-tech platforms to individuals – perhaps assisted by news organizations or other agents – was among ideas discussed in the first of the three webinars.

The original Internet structure created the conditions for the current lack of governance or personal control over identity, said [Drummond Reed](#), chief trust officer of Evernym Inc. and the Trust Over IP Foundation (and an [ITEGA advisor](#)). “It comes down to a single world: control. We don’t have control over the information we’re sharing on the internet or over the identities we have on the internet.” A shift from account-based identity to what Reed calls “self-sovereign identity” is needed, he said.



A key component of the shift is a trusted party — government or nonprofit — that would be responsible for governing compliance with privacy and identity rules and the exchange of value, financial or otherwise, discussants heard. [U.S. Rep. Bill Foster](#), D-Ill., [bipartisan digital identity bill cosponsor](#), was among webinar participants.

There is a role for government in assuring a single trusted identity for each of us, Foster suggested, and to structure a payments system “with so-called third-party anonymity.” Later, he said “the bag of snakes” in any system will be to decided who will be responsible for auditing to make sure that when personal information is shared it is not mis-used. At another point, Foster said he wondered why a system of “micropayments” for paying for digital information had not yet succeeded on the web. “And if you want to keep from being tracked I believe there are ways to make that anonymous.”



A lawyer for The McClatchy Co., a major U.S. newspaper publisher, recounted how publishers feel unable to abandon programmatic advertising driven largely by Facebook and Google without a demonstrated alternative for “contextual advertising” that would replace revenue perceived to be at risk.

“If there was a contextual model that was demonstrated and there was some sort of cushion to help us make those transitions, if there was a unified agreement among the publishing industry that didn’t breach antitrust and corruption laws, in order to change the model, that would be fine,” said [Meg Eason](#), a McClatchy senior counsel who focuses in part on privacy law and compliance.

Wally Snyder, the ex-FTC and advertising-industry executive moderating the Jan. 21 webinar, also commented on the government-private governance relationship. “When we talk here about working together and self regulation, the understanding is that government has to be present,” he said. “It has to be there to back up, often times to see what the legal guidelines are.”



#### THE INFORMATION FIDUCIARY CONCEPT

[Richard Whitt](#), president of the [Glia Foundation](#) and a Mozilla fellow who spent more than a decade as a strategy executive at Google Inc., suggested publishers consider an additional business model besides advertising and subscriptions, operating as “information fiduciaries” to help their users with

identity, privacy and finding information. Eason said she found the idea of interest, but added that right now, “We are journalists, we are reporters, we are not tech companies and we are not privacy experts.” In March ([see second item](#)), Whitt announced [Deeper Edge](#). “the world’s first personal digital fiduciary.”

RECOMMENDATIONS (See [final report](#) executive summary)

Based on the ITEGA’s research, reporting and convening, we recommend that foundations, advertisers, publishers, technology companies and privacy NGOs create or collaborate with a global public-benefit nonprofit organization to:

- **FUND** new business models for small and mid-sized news publishers that offer options for building trust with audiences (such as privacy controls, allowing them to become trusted intermediaries or fiduciaries, or joining a shared content/advertising network), and include independent oversight.
- **DESIGNATE** protocols, define identity attributes, and specify methods for authenticating and sharing permissioned user data across the Internet that put control of their identity in user’s hands, support publishers of all sizes, and promote healthy market competition.
- **IDENTIFY OR CREATE** and embrace methods for auditing the application and sharing of user personal information -- suitable for citation in law or open governance -- that can be the basis for public certification of networks and participants.
- **COLLABORATE** with governments, industry and public advocates to align the goals of a public-benefit organization with existing and anticipated digital identity and privacy models, and regulations.

-- END OF WEBINAR INTERIM REPORT --

*Webinar report (interim) author: Bill Densmore, founder, Information Trust Exchange Governing Association | [wpdensmore@itega.org](mailto:wpdensmore@itega.org) | 617-448-6600. The assistance of ITEGA’s [directors](#) and [advisors](#) is acknowledged and appreciated, along with the financial support of Craig Newmark Philanthropies, Omidyar Network, the Donald W. Reynolds Journalism Institute, the Local Media Consortium, and private individuals.*



**APPENDIX A**

**CONVENING QUESTIONS**

“Surveillance capitalism will destroy the free market and democratic values, starting with privacy and an independent press, without the adoption of user-centric digital identities that are governed in the public interest.”

First webinar:

- Who should create, control and benefit from people’s identity information?
- How does the use of a person’s data shape or influence public discourse?
- How has journalism been impacted by changes in digital identity technology and policy? How did we see this play out in 2020?
- Does digital identity advance or degrade participatory democracy? What about anonymity?
- Does every community benefit from digital identity systems?
- Does more data for identity purposes mean more bias or more equity? For example, how and when should biometrics be used for identity? Should their use be regulated?
- What are the implications for privacy and identity as new ways to sustain journalism emerge?
- How is it possible to give the public control over their private information, and still serve advertising that is relevant and effective?
- What has this meant during the presidential election and public health emergency?
- What was the role of large private platforms in the election of 2020? What should they do by 2024?
- What changes in the marketplace have influenced political campaigns and elections?

The second webinar asked:

- What is the role of digital identity when it comes to advertising?
- How have marketplace changes impacted this space? For example, how will changes to IDFA and the cookie-less future impact identity, privacy and digital advertising?
- What is the state of privacy and data protection regulation law, federally and on a state level?
- How might state and federal antitrust and privacy investigations impact advertising?
- Can ad tech become a trusted ecosystem? If so, how?
- What’s the relationship between online privacy and journalism?
- Which news organizations have already embraced secure digital identity and privacy? What’s worked and what has not?
- How might news organizations leverage marketplace and regulatory changes to become sustainable?

The third webinar, considering solutions, posed questions such as:

- What does it mean for a publisher to have a deeply engaged, trusted relationship with community members? How can publishers amplify new voices and new perspectives in communities?
- What do publishers have to consider on the technical side to achieve community engagement and trust? What must they consider on the policy side?
- Is it possible to have personalized advertising and maintain user trust?
- What's the role of digital identity in facilitating trusted relationships with communities?
- Is a solution like The Trade Desk's UID2.0 the answer? What are the next steps for UID2.0?
- Should digital identity solutions be open and non-proprietary? What type of entities should make the rules for such systems?
- What are consumers looking for from media outlets? What does trust mean to them?

**WEBINAR PARTICIPANTS**

**January 7 webinar**

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DISCUSSION LEADER

**Sally Hubbard**, author, director of enforcement strategy at the Open Markets Institute;. Hubbard is a former New York assistant attorney general antitrust prosecutor, and author of “Monopolies Suck: 7 Ways Big Corporations Rule Your Life and How to Take Back Control.” She founded and hosted Women Killing It!, a podcast series. Combining her two passions of antitrust and women’s rights, Sally helped pioneer the study of the relationship between concentrated market power and gender inequality. She has written for national media and appeared on a range of news outlets. She holds a law degree from New York University School of Law.

DISCUSSION PARTICIPANTS (alpha order):

**Cameron D’Ambrosi**, Principal, One World Identity LLC  
D’Ambrosi directs client services for OWI, a market intelligence and strategy firm focused on identity, trust and the data economy. Previously he was a consultant and then manager at Deloitte, working on anti-money laundering for banks and broker/dealers. His career began in the securities industry on Wall Street. His BA in history is from Fordham University.

**Meg Eason**, senior corporate counsel, The McClatchy Company  
Eason is based in North Carolina where she leads legal aspect of the newspaper chain’s privacy-compliance efforts. She has worked in contracts at LexisNexis and in various marketing roles. She combines an undergraduate degree in strategic communications with a law degree, both from the University of North Carolina.

**U.S. Rep. Bill Foster**, D-Ill., bipartisan digital identity bill cosponsor  
Foster represents outer suburbs of Chicago and brings experience as a business entrepreneur and high-energy physicist to authorship of one of the most promising bipartisan efforts to address web identity and privacy. His father was a civil rights lawyer who wrote much of the enforcement language behind the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Holds undergraduate and doctorates in physics from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and Harvard, respectively.

**Dipayan Ghosh**, co-director, Digital Platforms & Democracy Project, Harvard-JFK-Shorenstein  
Ghosh previously worked at Facebook on strategies to address privacy and security issues. Before that, he was a tech and economic advisor in the Obama White House. He now directs the Digital Platforms & Democracy Project at the Shorenstein Center on

Media, Politics and Public Policy at the Harvard Kennedy School and teaches at Harvard Law School. He earned degrees in electrical engineering and computer science at Cornell, and a Ph.D., from MIT. He writes extensively on digital privacy, AI, disinformation and internet economics.

**Fanny Hidveg**, European Policy Manager, AccessNow

Hidveg is a lawyer focused on privacy tech, human rights, freedom of information, data control and transfer from the Brussels office of AccessNow advocacy nonprofit. Previously she focused on E.U.-U.S. data transfer rules for the Electronic Privacy Information Center in Washington, D.C. Earlier, she headed the data protection and freedom of information program of the Hungarian Civil Liberties Union.

**Drummond Reed**, Chief Trust Officer, Everyn Inc.

Reed has been a technology advisor to ITEGA since 2015 and has spent over two decades working on internet identity, security, privacy and trust frameworks for private ventures, foundations and through the World Wide Web Consortium. Everyn provides services focused on decentralized identifiers and self-sovereign identity. Prior to starting Respect Network, he was executive director of two industry foundations, the Information Card Foundation and Open Identity Exchange and helped found XDI.org and Identity Commons. Based in Seattle, his undergraduate degree is from Harvard College.

**Matthew Thompson**, Board President, Kantara Initiative Inc.

Thompson serves as non-executive board president of the nonprofit data-industry trade association, Kantara Initiative, an effort to foster trustworthy use of identity and personal data through innovation, standardization and good practice. He is SVP for civil identity for North America for Idemedia, the French provider of facial recognition, biometric and identity-card technologies and “augmented identity.” Earlier he directed identity services for Capital One, the U.S. bank and credit-card issuer. His MBA is from Harvard Business School.

**Richard Whitt**, President, Glia Foundation; Fellow, Mozilla Foundation and Georgetown University Law Center

Whitt is an attorney and former longtime DC policy and strategy executive for Google Inc. who is now organizing support for the GLIA Foundation focused on building trustworthy and accountable web ecosystems. He is also an ITEGA advisor. Since leaving Google he has also served as a fellow in residence to the Mozilla Foundation and a policy advisor to Code for America. His degree is from the Georgetown University Law Center.

## January 21 webinar

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### DISCUSSION LEADER

**Wally Snyder** is founder and president of the 501(c)3 nonprofit Institute for Advertising Ethics (IAE) an education and public advocacy group. Snyder’s career has focused on advertising development, regulation and ethics. IAE’s nine principles covers privacy: “*Advertisers should never compromise consumers’ personal privacy in marketing communications, and their choices as to whether to participate in providing their information should be transparent and easily made.*” Snyder served as a trial

lawyer and as assistant director for advertising practices at the U.S. Federal Trade Commission before joining the American Advertising Federation (AAF) where he served as president and CEO, from 1992–2008. Snyder was inducted into the Advertising Hall of Fame® in 2009. He has worked with the Reynolds Journalism Institute, the University of Texas and the AAF.

DISCUSSION PARTICIPANTS (alpha order):

**Alan Butler** is executive director and general counsel of the Electronic Privacy Information Center. EPIC is a nonprofit research center focused on emerging privacy and related human-rights issues. Butler has argued cases involving workplace and consumer privacy. He is chair fo the privacy and information protection committee of the American Bar Association’s Section on Civil Rights and Social Justice. His is a graduate of UCLA School of Law.

**Travis Clinger** is a key leader in the ad-tech industry seeking to re-engineer a trustworthy system more aware of consumer privacy. He serves on boards of IAB Tech Lab and the Advertising ID Consortium and is also SVP addressability & ecosystems at LiveRamp. He’s a graduate of Rollins College. LiveRamp’s Authenticated Traffic solution to identity is integrating with The Trade Desk’s Unified ID 2.0 solution.

**Scott Cunningham** is an independent consultant to the 90-member Local Media Consortium, and project lead on its NewsNext Program — a strategy for deepening the relationship among news organizations, their subscribers, advertisers, readers and viewers. His long history — from the student daily at the University of Wisconsin, on the editorial, advertising and technical roles at the top of the U.S. newspaper industry, at USA Today, MediaNews Group and elsewhere — includes founding the IAB Tech Lab.

**Lisa Macpherson**, has been an experienced media marketing and brand-transformation executive at Hallmark Cards, Fisher-Price and Timberland. She has turned to understanding and helping reshape the Internet technology ecosystem to better serve democracy and local journalism. She is a senior policy fellow at Public Knowledge, an NGO working at the intersection of copyright, telecommunications and internet law. She is an advanced leadership fellow at the Harvard JFK School and a former organizer for the Center for Humane Technology.

**Jordan Mitchell**, moved from an entrepreneurial career in advertising technology to pioneer efforts at a new approach for managing Internet user identity and data. He is now SVP, consumer privacy, identity and data at the Interactive Advertising Bureau Tech Lab. For seven years he was VP product for advertising automation company Magnite Inc. (then known as The Rubicon Project). He holds an account degree from Michigan State.

**Mathieu Roche** has worked in ad-tech for 15 years until co-founded London-based ID5.io two years ago. As co-founding CEO, he wants to use linked IDs to help premium publishers and innovative ad-tech vendors with a better identity framework to enable them to compete against Google, Facebook and other closed systems.. Before starring ID5, Roche spent 11 years at European semantic profiling specialist Weborama. Earlier, for six years he did deal analysis for venture-capital firm Startup Avenue. He serves on the board of IAB France. His MBA is from Georgia Tech.

**Achim Schlosser** is CTO and director European NetID Foundation an alliance of major German publishers broadcasters and ISPs that runs a federated single-sign on (SSO) service for users within the European Union in competition with U.S. platforms such as Google and Facebook. Founders and participants include Mediengruppe RTL Deutschland , ProSiebenSat.1 and United Internetes and Deutsche Telekom among others. NetID reports 50 million unique users per month with 38 million active accounts. The login is available on over 65 websites. Schlosser is active in efforts by W3C members to develop privacy-supporting replacements for third-party cookies. Before NetID, Schlosser was a senior manager with KMPG Germany and held several technical roles at Cisco. He holds a computer-science masters, focused on data management and exploration, from RWTH Aachen University.

**Arvid Tchivzhel** is managing director, digital services for Mather Economics Inc., which provides data translation and analytics around audience, advertising, content and subscription conversion to the newspaper and other industries. He advises globally on digital transformation strategies and implementation. HE has worked with cable, hospitality, consumer services, nonprofits and “big box” retailers. A frequent industry-gathering speaker, he has degrees in economics and Spanish from Furman University. He has been an ITEGA task-group participant.

## March 4 webinar

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### DISCUSSION FACILITATOR

**Jo Ellen Green Kaiser** is founding chair of the ITEGA Board of Directors and consultant. She has worked as an editor, publisher and leader in independent media for over two decades. She is chair of the Foundation for the Alliance for Community Media. From 2011-2018 she chaired the Media Alliance board, where her focus included incubating the member-donor model for independent nonprofit publications and web services. She helped found the Southern Center for Movement Journalism, extending a personal focus on newsroom diversity efforts.. She previously served on the board of the Association of Alternative Newsmedia. She received a B.A. at Yale University and a Ph.D. in English from the University of California, Berkeley. She taught modern poetry, women’s studies and literary theory for six years at the University of Kentucky before leaving academia for media.

### DISCUSSION STARTERS (register to join discussion)

**Bill Michels** is general manager, product at The Trade Desk, one of the largest advertising-technology companies focused on connecting brands with publishers. His career earlier included stints at Yahoo! as search advertising and product manager, and earlier in various roles at location-data companies Foursquare and Factual Inc. In his career he has managed partnerships with Apple, Facebook, Uber, Twitter, Microsoft, Snap, Amazon, and LiveRamp. He holds a degree in geology from Colby College and an MBA from Columbia University.

**Ben Moskowitz** is founding director of the Digital Lab at Consumer Reports. The lab published reports for policymakers and manufacturers on topics ranging from CCPA compliance, to how consumers value privacy and security, to nationally representative public opinion research on platform responsibility. The lab is funded by grants from Craig Newmark Philanthropies, the Sloan Foundation, Ford Foundation, and Omidyar Network. Moskowitz spent five years at browser maker Mozilla, where he was director of development strategy. At Mozilla, he led teams on research, strategic development, software R&D, ecosystem building and fundraising. Before Mozilla, he fostered development of next-generation networks at U.S. Ignite, a nonprofit spinoff from the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy and the National Science Foundation. His degree is from the University of California, Berkeley in political science and rhetoric.

**James Vasile** is a board member of the Electronic Frontier Foundation and a partner at Open Tech Strategies, a consultancy that helps launch, join, evaluate, or influence open-source software projects that seek transformative change. He is also director of New America's Open Internet Tools Project. A recognized expert on free and open source software, he challenges the structural, security and privacy barriers that hinder free communication between people. He has also directed the FreedomBox Foundation, a project devoted to building small, low-cost computers that protect people's privacy, security and anonymity while they use the Internet. He is a Senior Fellow at the Software Freedom Law Center. He holds a JD from Columbia Law School and a BA from Fordham College.

**Richard A. Lerner** is CEO of Clickshare Service Corp. and principle architect of the User Data Exchange (UDEX.org) prototype developed for ITEGA task-group meetings. He is a computer scientist with over 20 years of experience in developing large, distributed, network applications. Since receiving his Ph.D. in Computer Science from Carnegie Mellon University, Dr. Lerner has led the development of many large-scale applications, both for commercial application and for industrial and academic research. His technical expertise includes federated transaction systems, concurrent and distributed systems, internet applications and software engineering. He is based in Amherst, Mass.

**Bill Ostendorf** is president and founder of Creative Circle Media Solutions, a web design, software and operations consultancy. He's worked with 300 media companies on three continents, led redesigns of more than 650 publications and 300 websites. At the start of his career he was an editor at The Providence Journal and worked at papers in Chicago, Idaho and Ohio. He served leadership positions with the Society for News Design and the National Press Photographers Association. He has undergraduate and masters degrees from Northwestern Medill.