EEMA

Communiqué

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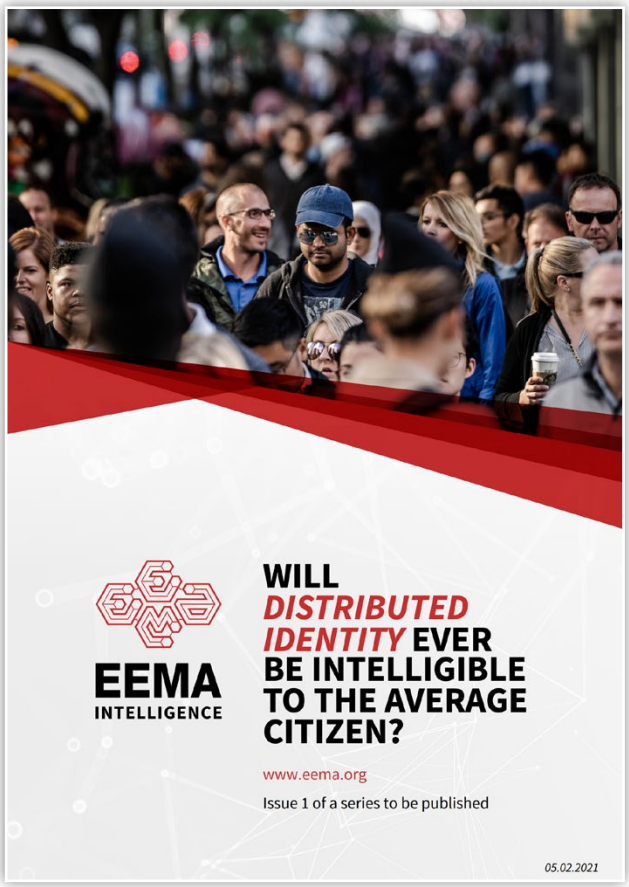
Will distributed identity ever be intelligible to the average citizen?

EEMA has published its first EEMA Intelligence Report, in which member have responded to the question - Will Distributed Identity Ever Be Intelligible to the Average Citizen? The results reveal that 43% believe that it needs to be invisible to the average person; 32% say that it is easy to understand with some public education, whilst 25% of the 92 respondents think it's too complicated and will not succeed.

The report includes insights from John Erik Setsaas, VP of Identity and Innovation at Signicat in Norway; Marc Sel, Founder and director of Trust Warp, based in Belgium and Arkadiy Kremer from RANS in Russia. Marc Sel comments: "One can but hope that some Distributed Identity solutions will prove their value in practice, while respecting the law including the protection of its users privacy. After all, many people are capable of driving a car without understanding the details of its inner working."

Chair of EEMA, Jon Shamah, states: "The key for distributed identity is to offer functionality that can require no additional effort (or thought) by the consumer. Therefore, an almost plug-and-play changeover must be offered. Not easy if the paradigm is so different, and Distributed Identity is indeed different."



The EEMA Intelligence Report is available at:
eema-intelligence-first-edition.pdf

EEMA Board of Management member joins Gemeente Den Haag

Robert Garskamp – a long term valued member of the EEMA Board of Management - has found a new challenge and will share his wealth of knowledge and experience in the Dutch semi-government. As Programme Manager IAM at Gemeente Den Haag he will provide support to organisations challenged with protecting and securing access (from outside and internally) to applications and systems.

UK publishes digital identity and attributes trust framework

On 11th February the UK government's Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport published 'The UK digital identity and attributes trust framework' policy paper, which sets out its vision for the rules governing the future use of digital identities. EEMA Speaker Panel member, Mark King, a Key Management Architect who spent 30 years at GCHQ shared his perspective.

Under the shadow of the slow demise of the Verify programme the UK Government has opened another consultation on a "trust framework". What is different this time, and is it enough to break the log-jam of laudable but conflicting demands?

There is explicit recognition that attributes checking is a driver, but no clear distinction between the frequent need for 'it's me again (and we've already established)' and the much harder problem of association with some identifier, especially if that is an existing public sector one. There's no shortage of innovative technology - that's not the problem.

This third consultation offers an 'alpha' which, in the words of the cover-note, does not explain what requirements (or 'certification profiles') organisations will be certified against nor what legislative or governance arrangements are needed, and it does not cover limitations on liability, how a trust mark might be used, encryption, PKI, digital signatures, digital identity, data portability, how delegated authority can work in practice, nor interoperability (including a recommended technical specification).

One cannot comment on the devil in the detail when there's not even an outline. The submissions to the last consultation have not been published, and without pausing to explain the impact for accountability, fraud and repair, buzzwords are flying and risk feints: self-sovereign, consent, zero-knowledge, user-control. Although, like drainage, it's mostly noticed when it goes wrong, infrastructure is inherently boring for a population that values convenience over security.

Although not as constrained as Verify on commercial or privacy dogma, the US NSTIC programme also did not deliver as expected, and did not solve basic difficult issues on "who pays" and "who gets to make money on it?" There is now a focus there on understanding the role that only government can play and pressing for that to be done in a credible timescale which should allow for independent system testing. Whitehall could usefully follow, phrased in less-emotive terms of reliance and compliance, not trust and 'user needs'. The payments industry can then fill in the gaps, but the public sector must not expect a free ride. International, not regional or national standards must be the way forward, but national action is needed to remove a few legal impediments. Countries such as Brazil are way ahead with the mobile driving licence (ISO 18013) although the name disguises the options for much wider use which would also need extending to be available to non-drivers. But first, why not follow GPG43 and set out the separate requirements for enrolment and authentication before demanding a super-tanker to be agile, and re-read recital 43 of GDPR: monopolies should not use consent as the legal basis?

DIARY DATE:
29th June – 1st July 2021

EEMA Annual Conference - Securing Trust in the New Digital Reality

Don't miss this 34th EEMA Annual Conference, where international experts and technology leaders from the public and private sectors will present their latest findings and solutions. The conference will also feature presentations from the European Research & Innovation projects - LOCARD and GLASS.