Extreme Centralization – Extreme Decentralization (EC/ED)

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I. THE PLAN

"You have to give local communities a reason to exist that is about more than saying: hey you could do his yourselves.; That is not empowering people, it's passing the buck. The bottom line is, we can't co-create a local dentist or GP" James Harkin

Gestell ... We dare to use this word in a sense that has been thoroughly unfamiliar up to now. . ."

The threat to humanity does not come in the first instance from the potentially lethal machines and apparatuses of technology. The actual threat has already afflicted humanity in its essence. The rule of enframing threatens humanity with the possibility that it could be denied to him to enter into a more original revealing and hence to experience the call of a more primal truth. Heidegger (309)

"We are questioning concerning technology in order to bring to light our relationship to its essence. . ."

In this text I propose to weave Identity Management in the EU Digital Infrastructure by applying the Steve Jobs model to the entire Union. The agency that public or private providers have is on device level. It controls to which platforms it talks to and the platform determines which services, products or spinoffs are supported. I aim to turn the current passport (a piece of paper or plastic with a chip) into an open source mesh-networked device (a chip with a (foldable) screen). Security is hardcoded into the device.

The device talks to only EU architectured platforms (IoT-A, Fi-ware…) The platform offers interoperability to preferred non EU partners. It allows for a 500 million market overnight that is able to build its own social networks, search engines, monetizing models (bartering, bitcoin, energy swaps, smart grid trade offs…) as the data are open to all citizens to build niche services and building models on.

It is a pragmatic clean slate approach that allows a 500 million people zone to determine their own pace in a hybrid world, without touching the underlying core infrastructural principals of IP architectures. It brings peace for another fifty year. The alternative is breakdown and civil war.

There are three main reasons why I think that this project is urgent and necessary, fully aware of the historical and ontological risks of hardcoding identity into a systems of systems that we can not foresee or predict its developments.

1. The first is that the EU research is developing in a vacuum. Projects are not building on each other. Legacy is not procured. There are competing overall visions. This EU platform could give a context to not only the current IoT inspired architectures but to the bio and nano applications that are coming rapidly.

2. The recent NSA news and the developments in the security and intelligence services has shown a fundamental flaw and weakness of the function creep that is inevitable in notions of end to end security that over-impact the requirements of our IP based systems.

A strong section of public information providers have become obsessed with ‘secrecy’ to the point that it is hampering the adoption of IoT and scaring citizens into maintaining false notions of privacy that are lost to them anyway.

A dedicated EU platform would be able to rethink notions of distributing insecurity, add to the notions of privacy and security, opportunity and serendipity as equal weights in the algorithms, facilitate direct democracy through referenda, voting and create a cradle to cradle ecosystem on item level through full traceability.

It would also render all current intel operations against the EU ineffective from the very moment of its implementation.

3. The current trajectory shows that the smart city is the business model for IoT and Future Internet.

The fastest form of building worldwide is gated communities, as they can now provide all services without any need for (new) public intervention or (new) infrastructure.

Monsanto has bought both Blackwater and a Big Data integrator in one year, indicating that they have no more trust in the collective agency of nation states. Then Bayer buys Monsanto and gets its own private army.¹

In a recent (2012) meeting of the GFF and the Italian Intelligence Community in Rome where I was invited to speak on IoT, it became clear that the 150 or so intelligence and security professionals realize that they can no longer secure both item level in this ambient connectivity nor the level at which political stability was harnessed: the nation state. Out of their five worst-case scenarios, only one was a conservative military one. The others were twice DIY biology and twice the ‘total breakdown’ of the state because of “its inability to deal with the digital”. In the EU citizens are organizing themselves on cheap hardware, software, data storage and analytics faster then the EU is sinking in as a winner of ‘hearts and minds’.

Why should they keep on paying to their national governments who can no longer steer on infrastructure and services (privatized), on law (85% coming out of Brussels) thus no longer guaranteeing the locality of the investments in pensions and health of the citizens who are still thinking that they are paying for this? In the wave of populism that we currently see extra parliamentary groups will grow stronger and stronger and will start advocating ‘Stop Taxes’ campaigns.

The EU is not immune to 90s Russia scenarios. In order to keep the necessary investments inclusive and for all Europeans, this scenario advocating to take control on the last real building block for a new digital territory, by simple giving everyone applying for a new passport from January 1 2020 a EU device, as a passport, is the only viable one.

The History of Magic, by Eliphas Levi, 1860: “Confess with us now for a moment to the truth of the transcendental sciences. Suppose that there does actually exist a force which can be mastered and by which the miracles of Nature are made subservient to the will of man. Tell us, in such case, whether the secrets of wealth and the bonds of sympathy can be entrusted to brutal greed; the art of fascination to libertines; the supremacy over other wills to those who cannot attain the governance of their proper selves.” p. 46
It has always been the task of elites to be a bridge between old sclerotic systems and sclerotic people clinging to solutions tuned to past situations and the breakdown and bloody revolutions pregnant in the rising contexts rearing their heads and getting worked up as they see no productive and joyous way into the contexts as they appear to them.

Rarely have elites been timely and decisive. The German Kreisau Circle has laid some theoretical foundations, it can be argued, for the current paradigm of local and peer to peer, as it focused on an extremely decentralized Germany in an equally decentralized but still united Europe, building on a horizontal scaling of local communities that would share infrastructure and resources. This mix of Christian inspired philosophers, Army officers weary with SS brutality (but a large part of them did not condone the Blitzkrieg), and German nobility adhering to a certain style and strong values of service, was not very well organized but was the logical context for the von Stauffenberg attentat and subsequent brilliant conception (but lousy execution) of hiding a revolution within an existing official plan for countering a revolution.

The Russian Beseda Circle loosely organized itself some fifteen years before the 1905 Winterpalace massacre that turned the popular tide fully against Czar Nicholas II. It consisted of a wide range of extremely conservative nobles, socialist and liberal gentry as well as the oldest families in the Russian Empire united in their common belief that without real reform and real changes in the decision making structures of the country it would lead inevitably to bloodshed and breakdown. These were no Kropotkins or Tolstoy’s, they had no anarcho-communist vision at heart and were largely motivated by self interest. Yet they made the same analysis as the anarchists, Lenin and the communist revolutionaries: there was no more common sense nor balance in the systemic architecture of their time that could be supported by a convincing structural belief system from which an everyday ethos for practical living could be derived and sensible business models could be deducted from. The story had dried up, the protagonists were no longer believable to the audience nor the critics, the actors nor the author and even the props started to complain.

The Beseda Circle was not able to organize a space where all parties could feel comfortable for a while. Although not persecuted by Nicolas (the members were too close to him) the Circle was banned and would never be productive. For the anarchists and communists it was impossible at that time, without data, without an internet, without social networks, without cheap hardware, software, data space storage and analytics, to see that there was a deep common interest between the Black Hand and the Beseda Circle. And as a new ontological space was born, it was filled with blood and violence and petty minds.

III. LET’S BE HONEST AS TO WHAT WE ARE BUILDING

“The essence of modern technology Heidegger tells us, is to seek to order everything so as to achieve more and more flexibility and efficiency: "[E]xpediting is always itself directed from the beginning ... towards driving on to the maximum yield at the minimum expense." (QCT 15, VA 23) That is, our only goal is optimal ordering, for its own sake.

Everywhere everything is ordered to stand by, to be immediately at hand, indeed to stand there just so that it may be on call for a further ordering. Whatever is ordered about in this way has its own standing. We call it standing-reserve.”

(QCT 17, VA 24)

“In the film, 2001: A Space Odyssey, the robot, HAL, when asked if he is happy on the mission, says: "I'm using all my capacities to the maximum. What more could a rational entity want?" This is a brilliant expression of what anyone would say who is in touch with our current understanding of being.”

So let us be honest about what we are building.

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