

Canada - We need a new identity system to protect and serve us



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An Open Letter to All Canadians:

Our existing identity verification system no longer protects us. When we get our drivers license, health care cards, passports or to open an bank account, we use technology designed in the late 1800's, e.g. birth certificates et al, to prove who we are. In today's digital age, these are easily susceptible to fraud. In security circles, birth certificates are referred to as "breeder documents" since with them, one can obtain other documents such as driver's licenses, passports, social insurance numbers, health care cards, etc.

The result? Every year millions of identity frauds occur to Canadians with significant health care and bank fraud in the hundreds of millions of dollars.

We can't easily act anonymously. For example, if you want to buy alcohol or cigarettes you usually have to show your driver's license that contains your name and address. We are using old technology designed for one purpose, driving a car, for another, i.e. proof of age.

We no longer control our core identity data. We enter our identity information over and over, to government agencies and third parties. There isn't a easy way for us, as citizens, to determine who to show our identity to and control our central identity.

Then there's science to contend with. What was once thought of as science fiction, i.e. human cloning, is now nearly upon us. Earlier this year, Chinese scientists announced they had successfully cloned monkeys. For a price, one can now clone their pets. Regardless of if human cloning becomes legal or not, our identity verification systems must be able to differentiate human clone 1 and 2 from all the other citizens of Canada from birth onwards.

Taken together, our existing identity system is now out of date. So, what's the answer? A new identity verification system, built from the ground up using privacy by design. It should be based on the following principles:

- A person should be able to act anonymously
- A citizen is able to have multiple personas either physical and/or digital
- They should also be able to "live off the grid" if they so choose
- A citizen should be able to control their provincial/territory vital stats identity except where otherwise specified by laws
- **However, when they interact with government or financial services, there should only be one physical identity per citizen**

What I've found missing in Canada is a broad discussion on this by the Canadian public. Most people don't realize we can create a new system protecting our identities and more importantly, don't know how to. So, I've created a paper/proposal that outlines this.

On Sept 3, 2018, I an email to the Prime Minister, all Premiers and the Minister of Treasury Board, with an attached paper/proposal "Canada - We've an Identity Problem" stating key components of this new system:

- New laws protecting our biometrics and consent
- An identity document verification service similar to what Australis has done for several years
- Longitudinal research on obtaining baby fingerprints to see if this is viable over many years
- Research on if use of fingerprints and iris scans are sufficient to differentiate human clones
- Rethinking vital stats services across Canada:
 - Obtaining a biometric at birth, e.g. a fingerprint
 - Issuing digitally signed claims to the person via blockchain and Sovrin by the vital stats service that the citizen controls either digitally or as part of a new age vital stats card
 - Obtaining a photo of the person when they come of legal age and then issuing a digital claim to the identity that allows them to act anonymously
 - e.g. Jane Doe walks into a bar and either presents a digital claim or, shows a card containing a claim of age. The bar checks the digital signature issued by the vital stats service and sees that she is of age. Jane doesn't have to reveal her identity
 - Issuing a digital certificate to each person as part of their vital stats identification. This allows citizens to digitally sign documents with a high degree of trust (something Estonia has done for many years)
 - Ensuring that vital stats identity data is safe from electromagnetic impulse events that would wipe out most digital information

I outline, in simple language, requirements. I use practical examples of citizens like Jane, Alice and John to show how their lives would be affected by the new system. I also show how they control their identity except where mandated by laws.

However, this is not to say the identity sky is falling and immediately adopt biometrics and a new age vital stats system. The paper lays out the complexity of what's required. Instead of rushing into this, a pragmatic approach needs to be taken to address this, based on the privacy principles illustrated in this paper. Organizations like the Digital ID & Authentication Council of Canada and privacy groups can facilitate discussions around this.

WE, AS CANADIANS, NEED TO BEGIN TALKING ABOUT THIS. THAT'S THE POINT OF THIS PRESS RELEASE - TO GET A DISCUSSION GOING USING THE PAPER AS A TALKING POINT.

Canada, it's time we collectively address our existing identity verification problems. We must look forward and not backward to design a system, protecting our identity privacy, for the next 100 years.

Please contact me if you'd like to discuss this further:
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Who am I?

Guy Huntington is a veteran identity architect, program and project manager who's lead as well as rescued many large identity projects including Boeing, Capital One, Kaiser Permanente, WestJet, Government of Alberta's Digital Citizen Identity and Authentication Program and Alberta Blue Cross.

Guy's been thinking about identity verification processes for the past 12 years. In January 2006, he published a draft paper "[The Challenges With Identity Verification \(2006\)](#)" in which he proposed using DNA from a baby to link to the vital stats birth registration. He took criticism from people who didn't want "big brother" having access to this type of database for fear of misuse. Upon reflection, he agreed with the critique.

In Fall of 2017, he published "[Biometrics and Governments](#)" in which he laid out principles to protect our biometrics. He concluded that new laws and regulations are required to protect our biometrics before any biometric is used for identity verification, authentication or a new age vital stats system.

Since then, he's published a series of papers laying out the framework for a new identity verification system. These include:

- [CANADA - WE'VE AN IDENTITY PROBLEM](#)
- [NEW AGE VITAL STATISTICS SERVICE - WHAT THEY DO AND DON'T DO](#)
- [A MODERN IDENTITY SOLUTION - NEW AGE VITAL STATS, SELF-SOVEREIGN IDENTITY, BLOCKCHAIN, KANTARA USER MANAGED ACCESS & EMP RESISTANT DATA CENTRES](#)
- [NEW AGE IDENTITY ASSURANCE - TURNING IT ON ITS HEAD](#)
- [CREATING ESTONIA VERSION 2.0 - ADJUSTING FOR CHANGES FROM 1999 TO 2018](#)
- [IDENTITY FEDERATION - CITIZEN CONSENT AND THE INTERNET OF THINGS](#)



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