

Interoperability: the cornerstone for a citizen-centered identity

IDENTITY

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Identity is an essential asset in the daily lives of all citizens. It provides access to private services, such as opening a bank account, and access to public services, including education and healthcare. However, in most countries this identity is fragmented. Indeed, while each government department manages its own identity registries, there is often no solution in place to cross check for consistency. To guarantee the reliability of identity data, it is vital to improve the interoperability of the various State identity systems.

ID cards, driver's licenses, passports and national health insurance cards are nothing other than bearers of information stored in separate government databases. The challenge, for both governments and citizens, is to guarantee the consistency of this information and constantly keep it up to date. This means ensuring that a citizen is recorded in each registry under the same identity — for example, using the exact same name and address for social security and the tax authorities.

By making a country's **identity registries** interoperable, citizens no longer have to register information changes with each separate entity. Instead, updates made with the relevant registry (marital status in civil registry, change of address in national population registry, etc.) can be shared with all concerned parties. Just like a jigsaw puzzle, each entity has its own set of information, which they share when necessary. This information is, of course, controlled by the citizens as well, in order to respect their privacy.

As a result, interoperability not only protects individuals against **identity theft**, but also protects governments against fraud, as it facilitates information sharing.

The various entities need to communicate using a common language when sending, sharing and using shared information. However, this can be challenging considering that many registries were likely developed during various time periods using different technologies. The general lack of standardization often stands in the way of effectively sharing data between systems.

The identity industry's SIA (**Secure Identity Alliance**), co-founded by IDEMIA, aims at addressing this challenge. The Alliance has developed and deployed a new communications interface (Open Source API) that guarantees interoperability between a country's various **identity registries**. This interface is independent from the technology, the architecture and the **identity management solution** supplier, so the interface can be implemented in any existing system.

This opens up new prospects in the identity domain, moving toward sustainable, robust and interoperable **identity management systems** that put citizens at the center of the ecosystem.



ID cards, driver's licenses, passports and national health insurance cards...we have so many different ID documents. The challenge, for both governments and citizens, is to guarantee the consistency of identity data for all of these documents. But how is that possible? By improving the interoperability of various State identity systems.

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