



Privacy & Identity Lab



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We have asked Rieks Joosten, the inspirator of the panel on Self Sovereign Humans, what he aims for with the panel.

What is the focus of your panel

Rieks: “Self Sovereign Identity is not *only* about individual users controlling their (identity) information. In this panel, we will talk about what you can do with it and what it takes to get that done. There are lots of questions, and not all are technical. For example: how do we ensure that the various technological solutions that continue to pop up in the wild will be interoperable. And how do we make sure it is easy for businesses to use. What do process engineers and business (logic) owners need to change in order to reap the benefits? What are the (less obvious) benefits? Who will be paying for what? What legal aspects (apart from GDPR, of course) do we need to take into account?”

What questions will your panel answer? What dialogue are you looking for?

Rieks: “The panel will explore a set of questions that relate to the relevance of self-sovereign identity systems. At the end of the panel we hope that we no longer perceive SSI as something that only offers control to individuals but that our perspective on SSI has been extended and we are all aware that SSI

- also includes business and process issues ...
- that require a collaborative effort to let it mature ...
- and that a ‘safe haven’ (‘sandbox’), such as the one that the SSI-lab intends to offer, is a useful instrument to support this collaboration.”

Are you optimistic about the autonomy of human beings, given the autonomy of technology?

Rieks: “Just as one cannot be ‘optimistic’ about the existence of the earth, we cannot be optimistic about the autonomy of humans, because it is a given. In fact, the SSIF thought-model that is currently being developed defines autonomy (or sovereignty as they call it) as the capability to perceive, process, store and exchange information about the universe and what is in it (cf. Article 10 of the European Convention of Human Rights), AND the capability to define what kinds of reasoning are valid, making decisions based on such reasonings, and acting accordingly (the latter separating humans and AI: only if e.g. a drone can decide about the reasoning itself that it uses for (not) shooting someone, will it be called ‘sovereign/autonomous’ in the SSIF way of thinking). The situations that we refer to when we say we are no longer autonomous are those in which we no longer perceive ourselves to be free to define our reasonings and decision making. Yet it is precisely this self-sovereignty that allows us to think that way: if this were not the case, then we would not see people (such as Titus Brandsma, Poplieluszko and many others) making decisions contrary to ‘common sense’ in extreme situations. If the goal is to prevent such situations from occurring, then SSI can provide means that may contribute to such goals, provided we will decide to start (developing and) using them. In the last years, we see a lot of energy being put into such efforts, so yes, we are optimistic about that and we’re happy to contribute.”