

The ID2020 Alliance Announces New Partners in Digital Identity Initiative

At the World Economic Forum, Microsoft, Mercy Corps, Hyperledger and the UN International Computing Center join Accenture in a public-private partnership committed to improving lives through digital identity

NEWS PROVIDED BY

ID2020 Alliance →

Jan 22, 2018, 12:29 ET

DAVOS, Switzerland, Jan. 22, 2018 /PRNewswire/ -- The ID2020 Alliance, a public-private partnership committed to improving lives through digital identity, announced today that Microsoft (NASDAQ: MSFT), Mercy Corps, Hyperledger and the UN International Computing Center have joined Accenture (NYSE: ACN) as partners in the Alliance. Microsoft will also donate \$1M to the effort, joining Accenture and the Rockefeller Foundation as major donors to the initiative.

According to World Bank data, more than 1.1 billion people - disproportionately women, children, and refugees - are unable to prove their identity and therefore struggle to access critical services and benefits. They may be denied a spot in school or turned away from the polls, may struggle to relocate or travel, and are more likely to be trafficked.

"Among the millions of people in the world who are displaced from their homes, women are often the most vulnerable - with digital IDs, they can access essential health and social services, apply for jobs, open mobile money accounts in their own name, and buy what they need most for themselves and their families," said Neal Keny-Guyer, Chief Executive Officer of Mercy Corps. "According to research, refugees displaced for six months are highly likely to be displaced for a minimum of three years and average of 17. That's why Mercy Corps is committed to alliances like ID2020 and partnerships with national governments, the United Nations and the private sector to ensure people have safe access to a personal identity."

In today's connected world, digital identity offers an opportunity to provide streamlined access to services, both for individuals and governments.

"In both developed and developing countries, we are living more of our lives online. Decentralized, user-controlled digital identity holds the potential to unlock economic opportunity for refugees and others who are disadvantaged, while concurrently improving the lives of those simply trying to navigate cyberspace securely and privately," said David Treat, managing director and co-head of the global blockchain practice at Accenture, which announced its own donation of \$1 million to ID2020 last summer at the ID2020 Summit held at the United Nations in New York.

The ID2020 Alliance is committed to developing digital identity solutions that are personal, private, persistent and portable. With its focus on user-control and privacy, Alliance partners are considering the potential of blockchain technologies to give individuals direct ownership of, and control over, their personal information. User-owned digital identity would be complementary with existing identity management systems, including forms of legal identification issued by a government. The digital identity provides a backbone to which any sort of credentials, including state-issued ones, can be associated, allowing a seamless authentication process for individuals and simplified interoperability for institutions. Just last summer, Accenture and Microsoft unveiled a blockchain-based digital identity prototype for the ID2020 Alliance at the ID2020 Summit held at the United Nations in New York.

But the group recognizes that technology is only part of the challenge, with no one-size-fits-all solution. Rather than making a commitment to a single technology, the group is establishing a Technical Advisory Committee to evaluate emerging and relevant technologies on an ongoing basis.

Brian Behlendorf, Executive Director of Hyperledger said, "The technology community has long used open standards, open source software, and open networks as a way to coordinate and cooperate. We're excited to be helping ID2020 apply these techniques to such an urgent and global issue."

"A refugee's future is far less certain than most of us, but their identities shouldn't be. We're committed to leveraging our technology and expertise to continue to bring digital identities – and the basic rights, services and opportunities they enable – to those who need it most," said

Mary Snapp, Corporate Vice President and Lead for Microsoft Philanthropies. "Partnering with an organization like ID2020 will drive progress on ensuring everyone has access to identification."

The ID2020 Alliance is also focused on the non-technical elements of bringing secure digital identity to scale. Launched with an initial grant from the Rockefeller Foundation, the alliance is focused on a market-based approach, leveraging the diverse capabilities and broad reach of its partners in a coordinated manner. The ID2020 Alliance's transparent, multi-stakeholder governance model is unique among initiatives focused on digital identity – partner organizations jointly manage a pooled fund, used to implement pilot projects, and work jointly to develop user-centric technical requirements and data privacy standards. In the coming year, the group plans to launch pilots focusing on refugee populations and childhood immunization.

"ID2020 grew out of a recognition that historical, siloed approaches to solve this problem were insufficient," said Dakota Gruener, the Executive Director of the ID2020 Alliance. "We are building an ecosystem of partners committed to working across national and institutional borders to address this challenge at scale."

Partnership in the ID2020 Alliance is open, with an inclusive structure that allows the participation of organizations of varying sizes and backgrounds. Organizations interested in partnering are encouraged to contact the ID2020 Alliance for further information.

About the ID2020 Alliance

The ID2020 is a unique public-private partnership committed to improving lives through digital identity. The Alliance brings together development organizations, private sector companies, governments and NGOs around a pooled fund, used to implement high-impact digital identity programs, and a clear governance model. Alliance partners work together to define technical requirements, ensuring that the technologies developed are interoperable and responsive to the needs of both individuals and institutions, and to prioritize and structure pilot projects for scale, impact, and replicability.

SOURCE ID2020 Alliance

