

## Towards an interoperability of privacy choices on the web

Web services have been focusing on a high participation of individuals since their early stages. And – starting with the web2.0 – this trend has become not just a component of the web, but possibly the most important for users and often for media. Social networks, location based services, personal informatics services, they base their success on the redefinition of the power law of participation, moving the 1% of active participants towards higher percentages. Content and information generated by users and participants are a crucial component of web services.

The past few years of technological evolution on web environments has left us another important component of digital services as we know them nowadays: a certain ease in mashing up information and data from one service, in order to surface them on a different one. Recently, services that integrate and mash-up different sources of user generated content (like Vodafone 360, for instance) are bringing an additional level of complexity in the way people share their information and data with specific people and with wider (often unintended) audiences. When users start interacting with an interface that will then ‘channel’ content to another service, they don’t have visibility over the ‘context’ where that content will appear: if I post a comment on facebook and then this will automatically propagate to twitter and linkedin – for instance – the very same message will interact with completely different ‘environments’; same words may mean different things to different audiences, people who have access to it are immensely different,.... Also, these services have tools to manage sharing and privacy that are different and incompatible: as a user, I can’t decide who will see my status update on facebook, if I automatically link my tweets to facebook. Users need to keep track and remember of all their audiences, and foresee some of the possible consequences. Each status update on hyves, each check-in on foursquare become like a chess move, where there are no tool to (pre)view what is going to happen when the decision is taken.

There are a lot of possibilities to improve the current situation, but they all rely on creating ‘cheeseholes’ to see surface elements of the ‘intergrated service on the integrating interface. 2 of the most important elements would be:

- privacy settings: can we create a standard that help see and – possibly – manage sharing settings from one service to the other, and harmonise them?
- Who can see this? Can we list the users who will be able to see my location update (or my picture), when I’m about to share it? Can we do it when I use integrated SNS?

The opportunity for W3C is to create a set of standards that ensure seamless interoperability for sharing and privacy management across services. This would enable a new wave of services aimed at helping individuals be in control of their information and content. For existing service, this would reduce the pressure of the current mistakes and backlashes in managing user choices.