
I am Who I say I am:

the search for identity

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Text for the Day

"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever"

Hebrews 13:8

I am who I say I am

- What is Identity?
 - Absolute vs Relative Identity
 - Some Possible Identifiers
 - Students on a Course
 - Binding Identity to Identifiers
 - Identifiers in a University
 - Directories
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What is Identity?

- Characteristic
 - Attribute
 - Label
 - Physical entity
 - Psychological construct
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Absolute vs Relative Identity

- Unique in the Whole Universe
 - Physical Person
 - Fingerprint ?
 - DNA ?
 - Unique in a Given Context
 - National Insurance Number
 - Name
 - Userid
 - Matriculation Number
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Some Possible Identifiers

- Names
 - Photographs
 - 'Official' Identifiers
 - Non-unique codes
 - Surrogates for Identity
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Names

They have problems:

- people get married
 - people get divorced
 - names get mis-spelled
 - people use different names for different purposes (or in different contexts)
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Photographs

They have problems:

- often not a good likeness
 - people change
 - relatively easy to forge
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'Official' Identifiers

It is illegal to use them for purposes other than:

- paying people - NI
 - collecting taxes - NI
 - providing healthcare - NHS
 - immigration/emigration/proving citizenship - passport
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Non-unique codes

These make for endless problems:

- they don't always refer to the same person
 - an individual may have several that are not linked
 - etc.
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Surrogates for Identity

- IP address - the most widely used means of restricting access to web content
 - Internal phone number - caller display
 - Mobile phone number - caller display
 - Credit/Debit card - so long as they get the money ...
 - etc.
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Students on a Course

- Process
 - Is the Name the Person?
 - Is it the Same Person Throughout?
 - Issues
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Process

- supply a name and supply certificates for previous qualifications
 - provide funding
 - matriculate (bind name and photo to a matriculation number)
 - attend lectures, seminars, tutorials and practicals
 - submit assessments
 - sit exams
 - awarded a degree
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Is the Name the Person?

We might not be very sure ...

- taken largely on trust
- could take the word of someone else who we do trust
- could take the word of someone who knows someone, who knows someone ...

This leads into Trust Realms

Trust Realms

Who trusts who?

- who do you trust?
 - do you trust people who are trusted by people you trust?
 - c.f. digital certificates and CAs
 - PGP model says that two half trusts make a whole
 - X.509 model provides a chain of trust
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Is it the Same Person Throughout?

We are reasonably sure ...

- due to the name, photo, matriculation number binding
 - you get a degree in the name you registered (that on your previous qualifications)
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Issues

- The matriculation code is unique within an institution ... but how does it fare in other realms?
 - Athens
 - LearnDirect
 - Cross institution transfer
 - Others
 - Linking VLE and MLE systems to the student record
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Binding Identity to Identifiers

A couple of examples:

- Students
 - Booking a Flight
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