FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Contact: Esther Ibrahim
+1 (781) 330-1881 | esther@ReliableID.com | @PostOak

Celebrating the 20th Anniversary of the Chartering of The City of Osmio at ITU's Geneva Headquarters

All are invited to an anniversary gathering on March 7

Geneva, February 27, 2025

The World e-Trust Initiative had been a bold attempt by the International Telecommunication Union, a unit of the United Nations, to bring accountability to the digital world. Built on public key infrastructure technology, the Initiative would enable businesses and individuals in the developing world to have a means to trust the identities and practices of trading partners around the globe.

In 2004, after a few years of development, the World e-Trust Initiative was presented to the ITU's member state representatives. It was not well received, having been perceived as a threat to the national sovereignty of the member states of the ITU. The member state representatives voted to direct the leadership of the World e-Trust Initiative to discontinue the project.

Saving a Great Idea

Those leaders felt that the Initiative's goals were important, and so they approached Wes Kussmaul, a member of the High Level Experts Group of the ITU's Global Cybersecurity Agenda and a contributor to the World e-Trust Initiative, if he would consider creating a new version of the Initiative that would be independent of the ITU but which would inherit its authority from the ITU's parent organization, the UN.

Kussmaul agreed, provided that the new entity be chartered as a municipality – a city hall for the world – as that would be both more appropriate as a source of authority and would also be more understandable to people than if it continued to be positioned as simply a "PKI Certification Authority" computer network.

The Birth of The City of Osmio

On March 7, 2005, the first meeting of the Charter Commission of the City of Osmio convened at the Geneva headquarters of the International Telecommunication Union. Participating in the writing of the Charter were Alexander Ntoko representing the ITU (previously head of the World e-Trust development effort), Ugo Bechini and Luigi d'Ardia representing the International Union of the Latin Notariat, and Wes Kussmaul.

Centralized Authority Done Right

In the twenty years since the chartering of The City of Osmio, this source of duly constituted public authority (DCPA) for the digital world has worked to show decentralization advocates the truth of Lawrence Lundy-Bryan's observation that "There is no such thing as decentralized governance" – that for example even Bitcoin, that highly decentralized cryptocurrency, is governed by a small group called Bitcoin Core.

Osmio shows the world that the solution to problems of rampant breaches, fraud, ransomware, trafficking, etc. that beset the digital world is not to pretend that sources of governance do not exist, but rather to build a source of governance for online regions that choose to accept its authority.

Governance By the Governed

Osmio itself is governed by a system called "optimocracy," where any participant in any online region that accepts is ordinances may participate in Osmio's governance. However, in order to vote on a matter before a commission, they are required to have measurably been present for, and participated in, the debate leading to the vote.

Anonymity and Accountability – *At the Same Time*

Since everyone wants privacy for themselves, and everyone wants accountability from others they encounter online, Osmio provides accountable anonymity via its "number plate certificate," Anyone can see your car's number or license plate, making you accountable on public roadways – but no one gets to know your identity unless there's been an incident.

The number plate certificate is part of Osmio's "PKI identity certificate stack." At the bottom of the stack is the "foundational certificate," which serves a function similar to a birth certificate. Like a paper birth certificate, it is used only as a "breeder credential" for generating the user's number plate certificates and other "utility certificates" and is never presented as a day-to-day identity credential.

To further protect users' privacy, Osmio's identity database contains no identity information. And so, for example, the identity of a blogger who has been critical of a dictatorial regime cannot be discovered by the authoritarian, even at gunpoint. The only connection between the "number plate" and the individual's identity is in the possession of the Attestation Officer, also anonymous, who is responsible for the individuals' enrollment records.

Only For Those Who Want It

Osmio's authority applies only to online communities and regions that accept Osmio's governance; Osmio is not intended to serve as an authority for wider audiences such as the World Wide Web.

Please join us in celebrating Osmio's twentieth anniversary at 11:00 US Eastern (GMT-5) on March 7 at osmio20th.osmio.ch

In the meantime, learn more about The City of Osmio at osmio.ch