

GOVT. MOOTS PLAN TO LINK DIGITAL IDS

Relevant for: Science & Technology | Topic: Science and Technology- developments and their applications and effects in everyday life

The government has invited stakeholder comments on a proposal that seeks to establish 'Federated Digital Identities' to optimise the number of digital identities that a citizen needs to have, by linking various consumer identification data into a single unique ID for digital transactions such as authentication and eKYC services.

The proposal is part of the Electronics and IT Ministry's India Enterprise Architecture 2.0 (IndEA 2.0) framework that aims to enable the governments and the private sector enterprises to design IT architectures that can span beyond organisational boundaries for delivery of integrated services.

"As various government platforms across domains are being digitised, there is a tendency to create more IDs each with its own ID card, ID management, and effort to make it unique, etc," the Ministry has said in the draft, on which stakeholder comments have been invited till February 27.

Cumbersome process

"Having a multitude [of] IDs, especially to interact with the government, makes it harder for common man for whom these are created! Especially given the diversity in education, awareness and capabilities, this also has a potential to further create exclusion scenarios," it said.

Noting that digital identity is fundamental to enabling the citizen to answer the first question asked in any interaction with a public or private organisation, 'who I am', it pointed out that Aadhaar seems to have answered this question at population scale in respect of all publicly funded schemes.

However, the Ministries and the States are required to create several identities for the same citizen acting in different capacities like student, teacher, farmer, land owner, entrepreneur, customer of a bank, driver, owner of a vehicle, pensioner and so on.

Optimising identities

"InDEA 2.0 proposes a model of Federated Digital Identities that seeks to optimise the number of digital identities that a citizen needs to have. The model empowers the citizen by putting her in control of these identities and providing her the option of choosing which one to use for what purpose. It gives the agency to the citizens and protects privacy-by-design," it said.

It explained that electronic registries can be linked via the IDs to allow easy, paperless onboarding of citizens and also avoid repeated data verification needs.

For example, when a beneficiary is registered for the PDS scheme, that record will be linked to Aadhaar by the PDS system storing the Aadhaar number (or a tokenised version of it).

Similarly, when someone obtains a PAN, that record gets linked to Aadhaar where the Aadhaar number becomes the linking ID.

Then when that person obtains a mutual fund account, the PAN, in turn, gets linked to the mutual fund record.

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