

A WEEKLY COMMENTARY

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The Price of Freedom is Eternal Vigilance

Vol. 60 No. 45

22nd November 2024

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Digital ID ‘The Spine of a Future Control Mechanism’ By Will Waite

It’s going to be a big couple of months for the government in terms of Australia’s developing techno-fascist state. The legislation on digital ID will apply from December 1st, we’ll get a decision on Labor’s embattled misinformation bill, where we’re not sure who is to decide what is true and untrue, and, to top it all off, we have Albanese “calling time” on our kids use of social media. It’s all for our protection of course.

But I want to focus on digital ID. The pitch for Australia’s centralised digital ID system is essentially about convenience and public protection in an increasingly fraught cyber environment. We’ll get back to this later.

First, a quick run down on how the new ID system works. Australia’s new system is composed of two parts. The accreditation scheme and the Australian Government Digital ID System (AGDIS).¹

The accreditation scheme offers voluntary accreditation to digital ID service providers. Having met certain safety and privacy guidelines service providers can come under the umbrella of the government’s overarching system. Bringing more digital ID service providers on board is an important strategy for expanding the system.

The other part, AGDIS, is the government’s own Digital ID system. Currently it has a number of government and private agencies on board including the ATO, Australia Post, Services Australia, the Department of Finance, and Mastercard. By December 2026 private businesses can apply to join AGDIS.²

In its submission on the *Digital ID Bill 2023* the New South Wales Council for Civil Liberties (NSWCCL) identified these general concerns:

The COVID-19 pandemic normalized mass data collection through contact-tracing apps, raising NSWCCCL's concerns about ongoing data centralization and the datafication of Australians. Amendments to the Bill [Digital ID Bill], made after the consultation period, inadequately address critical issues such as the secure collection, use, and storage of sensitive data, and the potential misuse of data for unintended purposes, particularly in law enforcement.³

and

By linking personal identification data across federal and state jurisdictions as well as the private sector, the federal government has complete oversight over the lives of Australians. There should be no justification for allowing Digital ID data for surveillance.

In light of recent high-profile data breaches there are concerns that a centralised store of private and sensitive information creates a tempting target or “honeypot” for cyber-criminals and would be blackmailers. While there are penalties for not adequately protecting user information this does nothing for those who have their information and permissions compromised.

This aspect of Australia’s digital ID system is especially worrying when it comes to the use of biometrics as a means of proving who we are. Biometric data records our unique biological characteristics and includes fingerprints, iris-scans, DNA, facial recognition and voice-identification. Roughly half of Australians are uncomfortable with providing biometric information as a form of identification, and with good reason. Since “biometric digital ID is “mapped” to your physical ID”⁴, unlike passwords, biometrics cannot be changed if they are compromised. Against the recommendations of the NSWCCCL, biometric verification is encouraged by the government’s digital ID regime. For instance, to upgrade the security of ones digital ID from “standard” to “strong” users must set up facial recognition verification by providing a selfie.

Another concern with this technology is its “interoperability.” Interoperability essentially means the ability to move information easily between different people, organisations, and systems. For instance your digital ID could provide permissions to banks, social media accounts, private companies and government departments all from the same facility. Of course, this is touted as an advantage in terms of convenience and flexibility, but what interoperability means is that we don’t really know what the limits of the system are. For instance, the interest of the financial sector in establishing digital ID infrastructure suggests financial capabilities that are not currently part of the system. Centrally controlled programmable and surveillable money comes to mind.

It is the roll up of different digital ID service providers and the centralisation of citizens’ private information by the federal government which is of paramount concern. Australia’s adoption of centralised digital identification can be seen in the broader context of the maturing plan for digital surveillance and influence of citizens

through their dependence on information technology . The most worrying aspect of centralised digital ID is that it is *the* essential infrastructure that would allow an emerging global governance network to act directly on the individual. Senator Alex Antic referred to Australia’s digital ID laws as “the spine of a future control mechanism”.⁵

While all this is happening in Australia the digital ID cause is being pursued globally as well. An example of “global governance” pushing for the uptake of digital ID can be seen in the UN’s Agenda 2030, adopted by all member states in 2015. Agenda 2030 consists of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with multiple sub-goals under each. Of particular interest in this discussion about global governance and digital IDs is SDGs 16.8 and 16.9⁶ that aim to:

16.8 Broaden and strengthen the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance. 16.9 By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration.

This “legal identity” means a digital ID. In May 2016 in response to SDG 16.9 the United Nations Office for Partnerships held the “ID2020 Summit - Harnessing Digital Identity for the Global Community”. This summit led to the constitution of the ID2020 Alliance described as:

*The ID2020 Alliance is a global public-private partnership setting the future course of digital identity, ensuring that digital identity is responsibly implemented and widely accessible.*⁷

While all of this is couched in the language of humanitarian progress we shouldn’t be fooled that this is anything but an attempt to expand the domain of the global debt-slavery system. This is why we find the driving force behind the Sustainable Development Goals to be some of the most predatory financial actors on the planet including former executives of Goldman Sachs, Bank of America and Deutsche Bank.⁸

This finance angle has a lot to do with the push for the global expansion of digital ID. Under the rationale of inclusion the rollout of digital ID is a way of getting 1.7 billion “unbanked” people access to “formal financial services”.⁹ Which only means increasing the reach of the global debt empire.

Coming back to selling points for digital ID being about convenience and protection. When they talk about convenience it is important to understand that they are talking about their — that is those who have power in the broader system — convenience. Granted, there are some baubles to be had in the technology world.

The convenience to waste your leisure and be sedated; the convenience to not leave your house to meet a friend; the convenience to shop at the biggest monopolies in the world; the convenience to have the opinions of these same monopolies beamed into your mind and the minds of your children; the convenience of having food full of synthetic additives and residues served up to you, and, finally, the

comfort in knowing that everyone around you is thinking along the same lines. What's the price of convenience?

As to protection. Can we still believe after the insane recklessness of Covid that governments are interested in protecting us? But let's say for arguments sake that our protection was top of their motivational structure, the big gap in their picture remains that they don't see *themselves* as the factor contributing the greatest risk. This week Matt Taibbi, arguably the most important independent journalist in the world, wrote about the vaccines¹⁰.

Berenson, who is quoted in the above passage, is currently suing the Biden government for their direct role in having him removed from Twitter for that very statement. Protection? Protection for who? *Who is the government?* for that matter. Needless to say I'm not interested in being protected by governments. Who that knows anything about the history of the 20th Century could be? I consider my safety to be my responsibility first and have no interest in growing the clear and present danger of unaccountable authority.

As a greater part of our economic and social lives is drawn into the virtual world we can expect the conditioners to increasingly concentrate their attention in this domain. Recent initiatives that have seen efforts by government to team up with tech giants to shut down "misinformation," and the recent announcement by the Albanese government to ban children from social media can be seen in this light. Interestingly biometric technology looks to be a part of this scheme: "Australia's government has issued a request for tender to conduct a trial of age assurance technologies including age estimation based on face biometrics."¹¹ How long before Australians are told, "if you want to use social media, you must prove your old enough by scanning your face or showing your digital ID. You need to do your bit to protect the kids." How many of us will say no? How long before digital ID is required to use the internet at all?

As a community we must remain alive to the dangers present in the unquestioning uptake of interoperable digital IDs. As a devotee of the Douglas school of thought it is impossible to ignore the risks inherent in a system which gives government, and their mates, "complete oversight over the lives of Australians." There is no doubt in my mind that the intention is to use digital ID to further entrench the virtual control matrix for the ultimate purpose of dominating the individual. ***

Footnotes:

¹ The Australian Government. 2024. How the system works. Available from: <https://www.digitalidsystem.gov.au/accreditation-tdif/how-the-system-works>

² Australian Government. 2024. How the system works. Available from: <https://www.digitalidsystem.gov.au/accreditation-tdif/how-the-system-works>

³ NSWCCCL. 19.1.2024. Senate Economics and Legislation Committee, Digital ID Bill 2023. Available from: https://assets.nationbuilder.com/nswcccl/pages/5963/attachments/original/1706501522/Submission_DigitalID_-_New_South_Wales_Council_for_Civil_Liberties.pdf?1706501522

⁴ Davis, I., Webb, W. Oct. 2023. SDG 16: Part 2 — Enforcing Digital Identity. Available from: <https://unlimitedhangout.com/2023/10/investigative-reports/sdg16-part-2-enforcing-digital-identity/>

⁵ Antic A. April 2024. The spine of a future control mechanism, Concerns rise over Labor's

Digital ID Bill. The Australian, Available from: <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/commentary/the-spine-of-a-future-control-mechanism-concerns-rise-over-labors-digital-id-bill/video/d05a37e29a2e3a66ee03055e91972325>

6 United Nations. 2015. Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Available from <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>

7 ID2020 at a Glance. Available from: <https://web.archive.org/web/20201101050851/https://id2020.org/uploads/files/ID2020-Alliance-Overview.pdf>

8 Davis, I., Webb, W. 2022. Sustainable Debt Slavery. Available from:

<https://unlimitedhangout.com/2022/09/investigative-reports/sustainable-debt-slavery/>

9 ID2020 at a Glance. Available from:

<https://web.archive.org/web/20201101050851/>

<https://id2020.org/uploads/files/ID2020-Alliance-Overview.pdf>

10 Taibbi, M in Berenson, A. 11.11.2024. Now it can be told: the truth about the Covid jobs is slowly coming out. Unreported Truths. Available from:

11 Burt, C. 11.09.24. Australia launches tender to trial biometric age estimation and alternatives.

Available from:

<https://www.biometricupdate.com/202409/australia-launches-tender-to-trial-biometric-age-estimation-and-alternatives>

Is There a Shortage of Consumer Purchasing Power in Industrial Economies? Computer says “YES” By William Waite

I was playing around on ChatGPT last week and happened to put this question to the AI. It’s answer was surprisingly unequivocal.

Yes, it said, there is a shortage of purchasing power in industrial economies and for all the reasons social creditors bang on about. Wages don’t keep pace with productivity growth (as measured in prices) which leads to the gradual economic disenfranchisement of the consumer, especially low and middle income earners. The gap is bunged up with debt which provides a short-term lift in effective demand, at least until repayment commitments bite, but ultimately makes the problem worse. The ongoing displacement of labour by automation is always increasing production relative to consumer’s ability to absorb it, and round and round we go.

This defect, the AI tells us, is responsible for recession, wealth inequality, overproduction, runaway debt, ineffective economic management by government and central banks.

As he should Douglas rates a mention which suggests that Social Credit is still the best solution, in our opinion the only solution, to this “phenomenon” apparently “widely discussed” and “tied to the structure of modern capitalism.” According to the AI “Economist CH Douglas”... “proposed a “social dividend” that would distribute purchasing power directly to consumers, helping to close the gap and balance production with demand.” What else could do it and preserve a genuine market economy?

This problem of insufficient purchasing power was absolutely central to Douglas’s analysis from the start. It is not encouraging to review this passage from *The Control and Distribution of Production (1922)* and reflect that the problem persists more than a hundred years on:

The root problem of civilization - not the only problem, but that which has to be disposed of before any other - is the problem of the provision of bed, board and clothes, and this affects the ordinary man in terms of effort. If he has to work hard and long hours to obtain a precarious existence, then for him civilization fails. As the miner demonstrably had to work longer for a lower standard of life, measured in terms of purchasing power, than existed in the fourteenth century in England, then for him progress was not operative... The plain, simple English of the reason is that his wages will not buy him the things he wants.¹

We might draw some positive conclusions from ChatGPT's treatment of our subject. Firstly, Social Credit, despite its low profile, remains a serious contender in the marketplace of ideas when it comes to establishing economic equilibrium. And, secondly, and likely because of its low profile, the machine doesn't yet realise how controversial is its diagnosis and remedy. I suspect if it did it would be engineered to take more care.

This was the worry behind a suggestion that I not publish ChatGPT's answer and so avoid tipping off the powers-that-be that their AI is telling some inconvenient truths. I doubt my little blog with my little readership will bother them enough to rearrange the algorithms and it might provide some encouragement to know that our ideas are entered into, and coming back from, the great collective subconscious as that exists on the internet. The consistency of the message is worth keeping an eye on though.

The other reason for publishing is that I have been told that I am difficult to read. I do my best. Perhaps the message can be helped by the direct and structured style of ChatGPT. My limited organic intelligence will take what help it can get. Over to the computer...

Question: Is there a shortage of consumer purchasing power in industrial economies?

Yes, there is a recognized shortage of consumer purchasing power in many industrial economies. This phenomenon is often discussed in economic theory and is tied to issues like wage stagnation, income inequality, and the structure of modern capitalism. Here's a breakdown of why and how this shortage of purchasing power occurs:

1. Wage Stagnation vs. Productivity Growth

- In many industrialized countries, wage growth for average workers has not kept pace with productivity growth. This means workers are producing more goods and services but not receiving a proportionate increase in income.
- When workers' incomes don't grow in line with productivity, they have less relative purchasing power to buy the goods and services they produce, creating a demand gap in the economy.

2. Income Inequality and Wealth Concentration

- Income and wealth inequality have been rising in many industrialized economies,

with a larger share of wealth and income concentrated among high-income individuals and corporations.

- Wealthier individuals tend to save or invest more of their income, while lower-income individuals spend a larger share of theirs. When more income is concentrated at the top, aggregate consumer demand weakens because there is less spending at the lower and middle-income levels, where the propensity to consume is highest.

3. Increased Household Debt as a Substitute for Income Growth

- Due to stagnant wages, many consumers have turned to credit to maintain their living standards, leading to rising levels of household debt.
- While debt can temporarily boost purchasing power, it's unsustainable in the long term because consumers eventually need to repay it. High levels of debt reduce disposable income and can suppress demand, especially if consumers cut back on spending to manage debt.

4. Corporate Practices and Wealth Accumulation

- Many corporations retain earnings or distribute them to shareholders rather than reinvesting significantly in wages. Share buybacks and dividend payouts primarily benefit shareholders and executives, rather than increasing the wages of workers.
- This focus on shareholder returns over wage growth contributes to economic growth that doesn't translate into increased purchasing power for the majority of consumers.

5. Impact of Automation and Technological Advances

- Automation and technological improvements can replace certain jobs, particularly lower and middle-income jobs, which limits wage growth and reduces employment in some sectors.
- While automation improves productivity, it doesn't always create sufficient new employment opportunities to replace lost jobs, leaving workers with limited means to participate in the economy as consumers.

6. Demand-Driven Economic Slowdowns

- When consumer purchasing power is insufficient to match the level of production, it can lead to economic slowdowns, overproduction, or even recession.
- Governments and central banks may try to stimulate demand through fiscal policies (like government spending) or monetary policies (like low-interest rates), but these measures often provide only short-term relief and may not resolve the underlying shortage of consumer purchasing power.

7. Social Credit and the "Gap" Theory

- Economist C.H. Douglas's Social Credit theory specifically discussed a shortage of consumer purchasing power. He argued that the structure of capitalist economies creates a persistent gap between prices and purchasing power, largely because businesses need to cover various non-wage costs (like capital costs, profits, and taxes) that do not translate into immediate

purchasing power for consumers.

- Douglas proposed a “social dividend” that would distribute purchasing power directly to consumers, helping to close the gap and balance production with demand.

Summary

The shortage of consumer purchasing power in industrial economies can create a cycle of weak demand, slow growth, and income inequality, ultimately affecting overall economic health. Addressing this gap might require rethinking wage policies, income distribution, and financial structures to ensure a stronger balance between production and consumption, allowing consumers to fully participate in and benefit from economic growth.

1 Douglas, C.H. 1922. *The Control and Distribution of Production*. The Information Council, Brunswick. p. 27.



“
[T]he first essential of a stable, peaceful and successful society is to get at the truth and to present – not misrepresent – the truth to everyone concerned.”

C.H. Douglas
Money: An Historical Survey (1936)



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Freedom Movement “Archives” :: <https://alor.org/>

On Target is printed and authorised by Arnis J. Luks

13 Carsten Court, Happy Valley, SA.