

The Evolving Social Web

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- There is a growing movement to make the social web:

- Distributed

- Federated

- Privacy Aware

- Most major social networks today are centralized. You log into one site to see your friends on that site.
- By contrast a distributed social network is the opposite. It is a bit more like the world wide web. People have their own sites or have one as part of a larger network, but they are all connected.

- For a distributed social network to work, data must be shared amongst the sites. That way friends on one site can be friends with others on other sites.
- This requires the sites to communicate in such a way that they understand each other.

- To do this, standards must be agreed on. That is, the sites must be federated.

- At times when people share information amongst sites, they may not want to share everything. They may want some privacy. That is, the sites should be privacy aware.

- How is this being done?

- A number of projects are appearing such as Appleseed, GNU Social, Friendica, Diaspora, StatusNet [Wikipedia]¹
- A number embrace open standards that are increasingly known as the open stack (OAuth, OpenID, OStatus, XRD, Portable Contacts, Wave Federation Protocol, OpenSocial Widget APIs, microformats (XFN, hCard, ATOM,)) [Wikipedia]¹

- Sites will be made “privacy-aware by taking into account the privacy settings of the user”².
- Technologies such as P3P, Powder, XACML, RIF, ODRL have been implemented for privacy controls².

- In the end, the goal is to have the “web itself be the ultimate social platform”².

- (1) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Distributed_social_network
- (2) A Standards-based, Open and Privacy-aware Social Web, W3C Incubator Group Report 6th December 2010, <http://www.w3.org/2005/Incubator/socialweb/XGR-socialweb-20101206/>