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Obama's Internet ID Plot Being Tested in Two States

A plot by the Obama administration to [impose Internet IDs on Americans](#) is now officially being rolled out, with pilot programs for the controversial online "driver's license" scheme already beginning in both Michigan and Pennsylvania. According to the White House, the virtual "Identity Ecosystem" being [funded and pushed by the federal government](#) is supposed to make the Internet more "secure" and "convenient." Critics across the political spectrum, however, are warning that the Orwellian scheme only makes it more convenient for the feds to [spy on people, control the public, and suppress dissent](#).



Indeed, critics, who have been sounding the alarm bells for years, say the plot — a version of which is [already in place under the brutal communist regime ruling mainland China](#) — represents a major danger to privacy, free speech, Internet freedom, and more. Organizations and activists from virtually every point on the political spectrum are gearing up to "vehemently" oppose the plan and its brazen threats to freedom — not to mention the constitutional and practical problems it entails.

Officially known as the "National Strategy for Trusted Identities in Cyberspace," or NSTIC for short, outlines of the plan were initially [floated by the Obama administration's "Homeland Security" apparatus in 2010](#). Faced with an overwhelming and fierce public rejection of the plot at the time, though, it appears to have remained largely on hold over the last several years — until now, that is. Under various executive decrees and programs, the Commerce Department's National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) is partnering with government agencies in Michigan and Pennsylvania to test out the online ID plot. It is already [seeking other entities to participate as well](#), including companies.

Of course, polls show [the vast majority of Americans now view the federal government as "out of control" and a threat to their basic liberties](#) — [for good reason](#). As scandals continue to swirl around the administration over [unlawful spying, mass-murder via drone](#), attacks on constitutionally protected rights, targeting of political opponents with the IRS, brazen lies, and more, what critics describe as the "radical" online ID plan is already facing enormous opposition. So, as always, the federal government is seeking to market its latest unconstitutional boondoggle as a safety measure that will supposedly help reduce fraud and increase "convenience."

The pilot programs will begin by targeting Americans who want some sort of government "service" — welfare, food stamps, permission to do something, and more. In [announcing](#) millions in taxpayer-funded federal "grants" to the two states involved in the testing, the NIST said the purpose of the online identity scheme was to "improve access to government services and the delivery of federal assistance programs, and to reduce fraud." At least initially, Obama's Internet plot is supposed to be "voluntary," with development of its "Identity Ecosystem" led by taxpayer-funded "private sector" outfits.



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The pilot projects, the agency continued in its announcement, “support the administration’s National Strategy for Trusted Identities in Cyberspace (NSTIC), which envisions an ‘Identity Ecosystem’ that allows people ... to prove they are who they say they are online.” In Michigan, the primary agency involved in the testing plot is the “Department of Human Services,” which received \$1.3 million from U.S. taxpayers to work on it. Pennsylvania’s departments of Public Welfare and Health, meanwhile, received over \$1 million to implement the scheme. The administration is already [seeking other state and local governments to shower more bribes on](#) in exchange for cooperating with the plot.

“States have a vital role to play in the Identity Ecosystem, both providing identity credentials and relying on them,” said NSTIC’s Jeremy Grant, “senior executive advisor for identity management,” in a statement announcing the grants to Michigan and Pennsylvania agencies participating in the unconstitutional scheme. “States are ideal partners for NSTIC pilots because of the many services they offer online, and the many more they could offer online if the costs and risks involving identity fraud could be reduced.”

For critics across the political spectrum, though, the emerging “Identity Ecosystem” regime’s massive dangers far outweigh any purported “benefits” it may offer. “While there are certainly many security problems on the Internet, the world is getting along fine without an online identity ‘ecosystem’ and nothing should be considered that threatens these values,” said senior policy analyst Jay Stanley with the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) Speech, Privacy and Technology Project when the plot first became public. “Certainly anything that resembles a national identity system or a ‘driver’s license for the Internet’ must be vehemently opposed.”

As far back as 2010, when the Department of Homeland Security first [released a draft of its proposal](#), the pro-privacy Electronic Frontier Foundation blasted the “radical” scheme. It also compared it to REAL ID, a lawless attempt by the federal government to coerce states into helping impose an unconstitutional national ID system on Americans. While that plot has been nullified by about half of American states so far, none has put up resistance to the “online” version of what could also eventually become a de facto national ID.

Among other concerns, the EFF organization highlighted the “unprecedented” threats to privacy, free speech, and civil liberties in the digital world involved in having government create online IDs. Especially troubling were references in the original Homeland Security plot to making bloggers “authenticate” themselves prior to posting their thoughts on the Web. In other words, [as in Communist China](#), anonymous speech on the Internet could quickly become a thing of the past if Obama gets his way.

Supporters have pointed out that the federal government has not yet announced plans to make participation in its Identity Ecosystem mandatory. Still, that hardly means there is less of a threat — right now, it remains to be seen whether the scheme even works. If it does, though, even without technically mandating it, the “Identity Ecosystem” could quickly become ubiquitous with federal bribes and coercion, all but forcing Americans to join if they hope to remain connected in the modern world. Indeed, its proponents hope that one day, the online ID could replace passwords from social networking and e-mail to banking and commenting on articles.

It is hardly a secret that the Obama administration already has plans to bribe and bludgeon the nation into accepting its scheme, too. Indeed, [in 2011](#), federal documents about the Internet ID schemes acknowledged that widespread adoption would not be likely without “comprehensive” incentives. “The Federal Government will consider incentive programs such as tax credits/breaks, cybersecurity



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insurance, grant programs, or loans for first adopters,” it said. “The Federal Government should also analyze how it can better align identity solution requirements in existing grant programs against the Identity Ecosystem.” Other analysts suggested the IRS might eventually require it for filing tax returns, too.

The federal government, of course, has zero constitutional authority to engage in the development of such a scheme — much less mandate or bribe Americans into accepting it. Leaving the Constitution issue aside, the practical concerns are major as well. For example, consider the implications of having a private- or government-sector hacker obtain your Internet ID, allowing them to access your bank, e-mail, healthcare information, and more all at once. If and when such a system becomes ubiquitous and is exposed as vulnerable, the next step in the federal government’s never-ending war on privacy and freedom [might very well be even more draconian](#).

Meanwhile, transnational control over the Internet remains high on the establishment agenda as well. The United Nations, the European Union, communist dictators, Islamist tyrants, and more are [all working together to advance what they call “global governance” over the Web by “global stakeholders.”](#) In addition to the Obama administration, [the EU](#), the [communist regime ruling mainland China](#), and other forces have all been pushing the Internet ID as a supposed “solution” to various real and imagined problems.

If Americans do not resist, freedom around the world will increasingly become a relic of history — in both the virtual and real realms. However, Congress could still slam the brakes on it all by simply refusing to fund it. Whether lawmakers will take serious action to protect privacy and liberty depends on how much tyranny and lawlessness the American people are willing to tolerate — or resist.

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