



Digital ethics - building trust in sharing data

The rise of blockchain and other distributed ledger technologies are illustrative of a growing need for solutions that provide trust at an ecosystem level. In a world where globalization continues at a pace and business ecosystems become increasingly complex, trusted business exchanges are essential for success.

Technologies such as blockchain enable trust ecosystems by connecting independent parties and facilitating the trusted exchange of value between those parties. The value exchange is shaped by features such as visibility, transparency, immutability, auditability and real-time insight, providing business partners with a new level of trusted exchange, ownership and confidence that can bring significant operational benefits. At the same time, the impact of these features is a source of ethical dilemmas: is it always desirable to have these new levels of visibility, auditability and insight in the value exchanges we conduct?

An example is provided in the healthcare industry. A majority of health industry stakeholders share the opinion that being unable to safely exchange patient data between independent parties (care providers) constrains progress in the entire healthcare field. The desire for data exchange solutions such as blockchain-based Electronic Medical Records (EMR) is extremely significant. Although these solutions are already available, their adoption is a delicate struggle that progresses slowly. Concerns remain over inappropriate use and impact of these solutions as they enable the exchange of (sensitive) patient data across entire ecosystems. Some key questions are: how does the patient remain in control of their own data? and how do we ensure the right levels of visibility of and access to data? In the worst-case scenario, patient data could be used against the patient by a healthcare insurer who gained unintended access to it. It is extreme situations like this that need to be unambiguously prevented, before widespread adoption of EMR solutions will find their way.



As such, the ethical impact of technical solutions should be considered in the early stages of solution development. Atos shares the vision that technical solutions are to serve business conduct and to add value for the stakeholders involved, including from an ethical perspective. As such, solution impact and ethical considerations are an integral part of our service and delivery standards.

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