Rebooting the Web Of Trust

a design workshop

San Francisco – November 3rd & 4th 2015

White Paper Guidelines

Ultimately, the best white papers provide information to solve a problem that will be useful to the reader.

A good white paper should not be too long. A good rule of thumb is the 3-30-3 rule.

- Within 3 seconds a reader should be able to decide if they are interested (title, first paragraph)
- Then 30 seconds to decide if the white paper is worthy of their attention
- Within 3 minutes get the essential points of the problem and the proposed solution.

White papers often need effective headlines and info graphics.

Everything beyond that in the white paper is to support those already convinced and lead them to a path toward further participation.

Finally, the readers should become convinced that the problem is solvable, become engaged in helping solve the problem, and have a path to participate in solving the problem.

Process

1. Create an first pass at an evocative title / subtitle for the white paper.

2. Define who the audience is — who are the readers you want this white paper to speak to?

3. Outline a brief use-case story that exemplifies the problem pain points.

    Please reference the Web-of-Trust topic Use-Case / Problems Worksheet

4. Write a use-case that describe when and where that pain point occurs (aka "the problem").

5. Justify why the particular problem pain points should be solved, or why they are worthy of the effort to solve them.

6. Objectively explore alternative ways to solve the problem, or how this problem has, or has not, been solved in the past by various solutions. Ideally (but not always) these should logically lead the reader toward a new solution that is worthy of further investigation (aka "a solution").

7. Outline the new solution. Demonstrate how this new solution is worthy of further investigation by the reader. Costs and risks to implement that solution should be shared. The readers should become convinced that the problem is solvable and become engaged in helping solve the problem.

8. Have a path for the readers to participate in solving the problem.

9. Add any footnotes that reference prior published works related to your topic or supporting your solution.

10. Rewrite the title, abstract, headlines, and take advantage of our graphic illustrator to make the white paper more persuasive.