In our last Stargazing post, we set the foundation for understanding what SUAVE is and where it's going.

We reminded ourselves of the most relevant research: Flashboys 2.0, Clockwork Finance, credible commitments, and strategy-proof computing. We suggested a working story based on the insight that MEV is a measure, and that we can use it to quantify how efficiently we are harnessing all the MEV we can and directing it into useful work, where "useful" is defined as (i) aligning user outcomes and (ii) securing the chain(s) under conditions of economic conflict.

"Useful work" is the foundation of the story we need to make collaboration the best of all moves, whether you think you're playing in an infinite garden or a dark forest. It's the thing we return to in the trenches, day-to-day; the measure we measure ourselves against, and the metric we need to stay on track when things get murky and it seems like we are losing our way.

Now it's time for the keystone of our narrative arc.

(Join us for Office Hours to discuss these ideas 2024-09-18T16:00:00Z

→2024-09-18T17:00:00Z

by using the link in our shared calendar.)

The keys

SUAVE has, of necessity, been many things to many people. That's what you can expect when a diverse group of talented people iterate in parallel through a massive design space. You can tell from the references to Kettle Cash, and bottom of block builders, and all the topics being covered in our Flashwares sessions that the iterative exploring continues apace.

What exact combination of features SUAVE requires is something we're still actively experimenting with, from L2 builders, to collaborations with key industry participants (both in web2 and web3), to cutting-edge research and development on everything from refunds to reproducible builds.

If you look at all these pieces, it may be difficult to discern what final form SUAVE will take. However, there is one point on which I am fairly certain, and this is the keystone.

SUAVE will make you reimagine trust.

How efficiently our financial engines harness MEV and direct it to useful work is the means, and it is a potent and quantifiable measure of the impact of our work. But useful work naturally raises the question, "To what end?" My response is that the end is a more trustworthy world

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Who do you trust?

Removing rent seeking intermediaries is delightful, intellectually challenging, and necessary work. Altering systems that would otherwise result in the concentration of power and resources over time is also delightful, intellectually challenging, and necessary work.

But the end of this work is that we can once more trust directly the people we freely choose to transact with

. It is not that we trust no-one.

It is an existential mistake to confuse veritas

(verifiability) with truwe

(stability, reliability, trustworthiness). It's the "worthy" part in trustworthy which gives the game away here. Mathematics cannot tell you who or what is "worthy" of trust because "worth" is not totally reducible to computation.

Our work is not to remove trust as we remove intermediaries. It is to provide many different potential sources of trust and enable people to choose freely between them, as we simultaneously provide the tools required to make the enactment of those choices truly meaningful and valuable.

Different applications exist in different contexts, which depend upon different trust assumptions. Trusted Execution Environments are the beginning of a reintroduction of nuance around trust to our little corner of the internet. Again, we ourselves are doing work on making these TEEs into "Trustless Execution Environments" but this is to indicate that you need to trust less machinery along the way to any transaction you enter into with other intentional beings in the world.

It is encounters with other intentional beings where the root of trust always exists, and SUAVE is ultimately about doing the useful work required to get us more directly in contact with that root.

The Great Community

The implication of a more trustworthy world is already outlined here, and it is no less than what John Dewey once called "The Great Community".

In that post, I made the claim that SUAVE is an attempt to keep power meaningfully decentralized, and that re-cognizing

(literally, re-thinking) MEV and its effects depends on our ability to search for, and find, others similarly affected by the indirect consequences of all our transactions.

At the time, I thought that this search alone would result in Dewey's Great Community, but I forgot a simple lesson of history: those who search are always the few.

It's been exciting to watch the community of searchers form, expand, specialize, compete, collaborate and mature. But those who look directly at the chain remain in the minority.

Seekers of truth are often inconvenient, annoying, and single-minded. They are also seen as less likable in a culture obsessed with appearances.

However, trust is a universally experienced phenomenon. Everyone knows what trust is and why it matters. And it's not limited to crypto: the desire to protect weights or prevent espionage in modern AI systems will be a much bigger driver of TEE improvements and adoption than anything we can muster in web3. Even more broadly than that, the simple question, "Where can I place my trust?" is one everyone will ask at least once in their life.

It is therefore a question more well-suited to the formation of a Great Community. And I think we are at the beginning of an even more powerful community than that which formed around searching. It is an exciting and beautiful thing.

The reimagination of trust is already allowing us to bridge web2 and web3 in ways we think will prove to be extraordinarily meaningful and–more importantly–fun.

That said, the architecture of our current testnet Toliman–which is only a part of the grander vision I've been sketching in these two posts–has also allowed for specific web3 use cases to be deployed which were not possible prior to the reimagination of trust.

Vires in se

SUAVE asks us all a very simple question: what will it take to earn each other's trust?

Certainly a big part of that is trusting less stuff

between each other, whether that stuff is other people, institutions, or machinery. But, there is something more being asked of us…

Philosophically, it has to do with hospitality and vulnerability: "Who or what will you invite in and share your life with?" Technically, it has to do with the question: "Where do we place trust, under which conditions?" We should aim to be nuanced, flexible, and precise on both fronts.

We have the foundation, and now the keystone. It's up to each one of us to build the arch that connects them and continues the work to illuminate, democratize, and distribute.