OpenCola: The Antisocial Network

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Who am I?
**Opencola Beta Available**

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Categories:

- Network Technology

I just got the beta of Opencola. (Thanks Howard!) On the surface, it looks like a bookmarking, meta-searching relevance tracking front end. Very useful just for meta-searching various search engines and news sources and filing your information. You have various folders for different topics and you mark the relevance of various documents and you can continue to search for more stuff similar to opencola. Opencola Pro (user) thing is that you can add peers that can look at your public folders.
What’s Happened Since?
Big Tech Problems

- **Information Silos** (Facebook’s Secret War on Switching Costs)
- **The Attention Economy** (Sick Of The Attention Economy?)
- **Privacy abuse** (John Oliver on online data brokers)
- **Corporate concentration of wealth / power** (The Antitrust Case Against Facebook)
- **Misinformation** (We Tracked Down A Fake-News Creator...)
- **Polarization** (How tech platforms fuel U.S. political polarization)
- **Stifled Innovation** (Android users on Twitter can pay to drop the Spaces button)
- **Bots** (The Social Impact Of Bad Bots And What To Do About Them)
What’s the Deal?
What’s the Deal?

You get

- The ability to (indirectly) interact with other people by performing a small set of actions on content (Post, Like, Rate, Comment, Tag, Share)
- A feed

in exchange for

- All the aforementioned problems
Why?

“... in a country anchored by democratic values and fear of tyranny derived from breaching individual civil liberties, why does the free market today offer no real alternative to the exchange of free use of social media for pervasive surveillance?”

- The Antitrust Case Against Facebook
How Can We Have a More Trustworthy Internet?
Principles of Trust

- Transparency
- Accountability
- Personal Control
- Security
Principles of Trust

- **Transparency**: Closed source, for profit model minimizes this.
- **Accountability**: Closed source, for profit model minimizes this.
- **Personal Control**: Closed source, for profit model minimizes this.
- **Security**: For profit means your information will be sold.
- Strongly suggests a free, open source, distributed software model.
Demo
Simplified Architecture

- Web UI
- Browser Extension
- API
- Entity Store
- File Store
- Search Index
- Network Provider

**Reagent (ClojureScript)**

- SQLite / Postgres
- Local / Shared
- Lucene / Solr
- HTTP / ZeroTier / ...

**Chrome Based**

**Ktor (Kotlin)**
(Database) Facts

\[\text{authorityId}, \text{entityId}, \text{attribute}, \text{value}, \text{operation}, \text{transactionId}\]

- Who is asserting the fact
- What the fact is referring to (hash)
- Property being referred to (URI)
- Value of the attribute (ByteArray)
- Asserting or retracting?
- Id of signed transaction the fact is packaged in
How does this help?

- **Information Silos**: Your data goes wherever you want
- **The Attention Economy**: No advertising. No incentive to keep your attention.
- **Privacy abuse**: Your data is yours. You should share it only with those you trust.
- **Corporate concentration of wealth / power**: You can move away.
- **Misinformation**: Information provenance supports accountability
- **Polarization**: Less incentive to share negative emotion
- **Stifled Innovation**: Anybody can contribute
- **Bots**: Practically impossible with social friction and accountability
What does OpenCola not Address?

- **Information Bubbles**: These are natural, and have always existed, we just have been less aware of them. It’s a people problem, not a technical problem.
What We’re Thinking About:

- Visibility beyond direct peers
- Mirroring existing social activity via the extension
- Bulk data importers from existing sites
- Managing Identity
- Mobile app
- Specialized recommenders using generalized data (YouTube, Amazon, ...)
- Publishers vs. Consumers
- Leveraging network to enable trust algorithms
- Application / Recommendation ecosystem
- Search Filters (to support custom feeds)
OK, Now What?

- Trying to solve a problem worth solving, even if we make no money
- We’re a non-profit, public good company
- Not looking for VC funding
- Want to work with other smart, cool people
- Looking for debate, collaboration, ideas
- Specifically interested in
  - Alternative Network Providers (thinking about Tor)
  - Transient / “dead drop” storage to address P2P challenges
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