Toward a More Ethical Digital World: How to Think and Talk About Life in the Digital World

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Agenda

- Introduction
- “Me2B”
- Me2B as an Ethical Foundation
- The Me2B Relationship & Commitment
- The Me2B Deal
Introduction
The internet has changed everything.
The internet has changed how we live.
We live in the physical world.
We also live in the digital world.
We don’t have the right vocabulary to describe our digital lives.
And it’s hurting us.
“Data is the new oil.”
Architects of the digital world didn’t reproduce or ensure the same social norms we enjoy in the physical world.
Surveillance Capitalism: “the process of commodifying personal data with the core purpose of profit-making”

Initially, analyzing behavior was used for service improvement.

In this cycle, only behavioral data needed for service improvements are rendered. These are reinvested in the user experience.

Shoshana Zuboff, *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism*
But it quickly became a “business model” for new-fangled internet businesses. (Like Google.)
Surveillance Capitalism
Is the irresistible allure of lazy marketing & easy money.
Shreds **personal privacy**. We wouldn’t tolerate this kind of behavior in the physical world.
Deliberately exploits what we used to call “customers”.

Is essentially a highly asymmetrical, dysfunctional B2C relationship.
Enter “Me2B”
Who Coined “Me2B”?  

Ctrl-Shift (2014)  

Meeco  

Bill Price & David Jaffe (2014)  

Probably others
What is Me2B?

- It’s an adjective.
- It’s a deliberate response to the asymmetry of B2C relationship “I’m in charge.”
- “Me2B” represents the relationship that I have with any institution
  - Traditionally understood as “being a customer of”
  - Not “employee of” or “citizen of”
    - (But the ethical rules may still apply.)
Me2B is an ethos.
Core Belief: Respektful, more balanced Me2B Relationships are better for both Me-s and B-s.
Core Belief: Respectful, more balanced Me2B Relationships foster wellbeing for both Me-s and B-s.
Other Groups That Align with the Me2B Ethos

- Center for Humane Technology
- MyData
- ID2020
- Ranking Digital Rights
- Decentralized Identity Foundation
- Trust Over IP
- AI Now Institute
- Data 4 Black Lives
- Patient Privacy Rights
- A New Governance
- Customer Commons
- EFF
- Mozilla
- Online Trust Alliance.....
- In fact, there are hundreds
  http://www.goodtech.wiki/
Me2B Usage

- When used, it implies **idealized Me2B principles**
  - Me2B Deal
  - Me2B Relationship
  - Me2B Commitment

- **Aspirational and achievable**
Anyone can use it. It's not a trademarked term.
(In fact, please **do** use it.)
Me2B as an Ethical Foundation
▪ Human Rights
  UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights – Article 12[1]
▪ Consumer Rights[3]
▪ Communication Privacy Management Theory[5]
▪ How we behave in the physical world

[3] https://www.consumersinternational.org/who-we-are/consumer-rights
Core Belief restated: **Healthy**

Me2B Relationships are better for both Me-s and B-s.
Taking a note from psychology on the characteristics of healthy human relationships.
Me2B

Rules of Engagement

- **Freedom**
  We agree to not coerce or manipulate each other.

- **Respect of Boundaries**
  We agree to respect each other's personal boundaries, including...

- **Respectful Defaults**
  In the absence of stated preferences, we default to the most conservative behavior.

- **Fairness & Non-exploitation**
  We agree to treat each other fairly and not exploit things that are shared.

- **Good Communication**
  We agree to be forthright, honest and clear in our communication.

- **Non-Harming**
  We agree to not willfully harm one another.

- **Problem Solving & Accountability**
  We agree to respectful, collaborative, and fair problem solving methods.
Add a dash of Consumer Rights sensibilities
1. I'm in Charge
   Of the relationship
   Of information about me

2. Play Nice
   Me2B Rules of Engagement

3. No information about me without a Me2B Commitment
In short, it’s about respectful businesses, products & technology, that treat people right.
* It’s Not Just Me

- The Me2B ethos isn’t individualistic.
- It recognizes our interdependence
  Web of wellbeing
- Healthy societies need respectful relationships at all levels
  Including a planetary level
  We must also respect our planet
The Me2B Relationship
It’s complicated.
The internet has changed everything.
Who’s the B?
The B is the **legal entity** that built the thing.
What’s the nature of my relationship with a B?
Me2B Relationship in the Physical World*

- Geographical
  - Local – retailers, restaurants, theaters
  - Remote – manufacturers
- High autonomy & agency
- Loyalty
- Proportional legal burden
- Human customer care

* Non-digital products
Me2B
Relationship in the Digital World

- Paradoxical geography
  Absence of space
  Simultaneously proximal and remote
- Reduced autonomy & agency
  Forced into relationships
  Surveilled
  DIY privacy burden (and nowhere near as intuitive as physical world)
- High legal burden for **everything**
- DIY and non-human customer care
The deliberate relationship I have with a business as experienced through multiple touchpoints:

- Interaction with the *business*
  - Required legal agreement establishment and maintenance
  - Customer Care
- Interaction with a particular brand of the business, as embodied through *connected products & services*:
  - Brand website
  - Brand app
  - Branded connected device
The Me2B Relationship is layered.
It’s a legal agreement.

Contract of Adhesion
Customer care has changed

Fixing things is quick & easy

The bot quickly fixes your problem or connects you to someone who can.

Start chatting now

Need help over phone? We can call you.

The bot quickly figures out what you need help with.

It fixes your issue, or connects you with a human if you need more help.

You're on your way!

Here are a few things you can take care of on your own

- Check on an order
- Returns & Refunds
- Manage content & devices
- Get help with Prime
- Update payment info
- Account settings
More accessible interaction with B than BI (Before Internet).
But disproportionate legal burden.
The internet has changed every thing.
Our relationship with things has been private & purpose built.
But with connected computing, things are capable of regular two-way interaction & observation.
In other words, we have relationships with things.
Let’s call these Me2P Relationships
Connected digital products are digital brand agents.
Me2B, Me2P. It’s complicated.
Me2B Relationship Layers

Me2B Legal Relationship with Apple, Inc.

Me2P Experiential Relationship with iPhone

B2B Hidden Affiliates (3rd party integrations & software suppliers)
Me2B Relationship Layers

Me2B Legal Relationship with Apple Inc.

Me2B Legal Relationship with Google Inc.

Me2P Experiential Relationship with Chrome Browser

Me2T Technology Enabler Relationship

B2B Hidden Affiliates (3rd party integrations & software suppliers + native device monitoring)

B2B Hidden Affiliates (3rd party integrations + software suppliers)
Who’s the B?
Me2B Relationship Layers

Me2B Legal Relationship with Apple, Inc.
- B2B Hidden Affiliates
  - 3rd party integrations + software suppliers
  - Chrome monitoring
  - Native device monitoring

Me2B Legal Relationship with Google, Inc.
- B2B Hidden Affiliates
  - 3rd party integrations + software suppliers
  - Native device monitoring

Me2B Legal Relationship with Facebook, Inc.
- B2B Hidden Affiliates
  - 3rd party integrations + software suppliers

Me2P Experiential Relationship with Instagram Website

Me2T Technology Enabler Relationship
Businesses are celebrating the confusion.
“Me2B” covers all of the layered relationships & touchpoints.
Because all the touchpoints should be respectful.
Me2B Relationship Lifecycle & Me2B Commitments
Me2B Relationship Lifecycle Model

- Acquaintance
- Buildup
- Commitment
- Deterioration
- Termination
# Me2B Relationship Lifecycle Model

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<td><strong>Yeah, I like it. I’m going to buy something here.</strong></td>
<td><strong>I’m a regular shopper/patron.</strong></td>
<td><strong>I’m tired of their stuff/they changed their stuff/their stuff no longer suits me.</strong></td>
<td><strong>I don’t go there anymore.</strong></td>
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| Digital World | I want to do X online. | I explore a website or download an app and play with it. | I regularly use the service. I like it, so I create an account. | I'm using the service less —for whatever reasons. | I no longer use or even open the website/app. I delete my account. |

(No relationship is ever this clean, and no model is ever perfect. It’s just a tool to help us apply social norms to digital Me2B Commitments.)
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Comment from IIW: Overlay Remembered, Recognized and Responded to into each phase
A digital Me2B “Marriage” begins when the individual establishes an account.
## Me2B Relationship Lifecycle Model

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**Me2B “Marriage” Start**

**Me2B “Marriage” End**
By creating an account, I’m saying:

“\textbf{I want to be remembered, recognized, and responded to}\textsuperscript{*} by the product when I’m logged in.”

\textsuperscript{*} https://github.com/WebOfTrustInfo/rwot6-santabarbara/blob/master/topics-and-advance-readings/functional-identity-primer.md
This entails uniquely identifying me.
Ceremony of agreeing to Terms of Service marks the beginning of a digital “Me2B Marriage”.
This is a legal contract.
• In a Me2B “Marriage”:
  Logged in and being remembered, recognized and personally responded to.
• Not in a Me2B Commitment
Me2B Relationship Lifecycle Model (idealized)

Acquaintance

Buildup

Commitment

Sign up for account

Deterioration

Termination

Me2B Marriage
Logged-In and Remembered, Recognized, Responded To

No Me2B Commitment
Anonymous
The **No Me2B Commitment** state reflects window-shopping in the physical world.
When I’m **not** in a Me2B Commitment, I have a reasonable expectation of anonymity.
But it’s complicated.
Me2B Relationship Lifecycle Model (revised from IIW feedback)

- **Acquaintance**: Sign up for account
- **Buildup**: Temporarily “Remembered”, “Recognized”, & “Responded to” but not identified
- **Commitment**: Remembered, Recognized, [personally] Responded To
- **Deterioration**: Me2B “Marriage”
- **Termination**: No Me2B Commitment

*No Me2B Commitment*  
*Anonymous*  

*No Me2B Commitment*  
*Anonymous*
Multiple Types of Commitment

- **Me2B “Marriage”:** creating an account; being personally recognized, remembered and responded to.
- **Promotional Commitment:** signing up for promotional emails.
- **Loyalty Program Commitment:** Signing up for a loyalty program [but not creating credentials]
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<tr>
<td>I’m going to go into the place and check it out.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I want to do X online.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m anonymous until I say otherwise.</td>
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Characteristics of Me2B Relationships in the Digital World

- Layered
- Longitudinal
- Regular interactions
- Forced Me2B Commitments

Legal Agreement Being
  - Remembered
  - Recognized and
  - Responded to

- We have many
Me2B Deal
Fair value **given** for fair value **received**.

I’m in charge
The internet has changed everything.
Freemium business model.
TANSTAAFL
There ain’t no such thing as a free lunch.
What have I given for the value received in the digital world?

Because TANSTAAFL
Several industries practice product subsidization.
HotelTonight is now in over 100 destinations! Be spontaneous and book a weekend getaway.
Multiple Currencies

1. Buying physical “things”

Money
Multiple Currencies

1. Buying physical “things”
   - Money

2. Consuming media
   - Time & Attention
Multiple Currencies

1. Buying physical “things”
   - Money

2. Consuming media
   - Time & Attention

3. Doing things in the digital world
   - Time, Attention, & Behavioral Information
In the digital world, we use all three types of currency.
In the digital world, free isn’t without cost.
You deserve to know what you’re paying for “free”.
Two Types of Me2B Deals

- One-off transaction
- Me2B Commitment Deal
One-Off

- **One-off transaction**
  
  “I want to purchase or do a thing.”
  “I’ll give you X and you’ll give me Y.”
Me2B Relationship Lifecycle Model

- Acquaintance
- Buildup
- Commitment
- Deterioration
- Termination

Me2B Commitment:
- Remembered, Recognized, Responded To

No Me2B Commitment:
- Anonymous

One-off Transaction

Sign up for account
Setting up the Me2B Commitment Terms

“I want to be remembered, recognized and responded to by this product, and I understand I will be giving you information <X> for an agreed-upon use, and I’ll receive <Y>.”
Me2B Commitment Deal

- **Setting up the Me2B Commitment Terms**
  “I want to be remembered, recognized and responded to by this product, and I understand I will be giving information <X> for an agreed-upon use, and I’ll receive <Y>.”

- **Creating an account**
Setting up the Me2B Me2B Commitment Terms

“I want to be remembered, recognized and responded to by this product, and I understand I will be giving information <X> for an agreed-upon use, and I’ll receive <Y>.”

- Creating an account
- Agreeing to TOS/TOU
Me2B Commitment Deal

- Setting up the Me2B Commitment Terms
  “I want to be remembered, recognized and responded to by this product, and I understand I will be giving information <X> for an agreed-upon use, and I’ll receive <Y>."

- Creating an account
- Agreeing to TOS/TOU
- Can change over time
Me2B Relationship Lifecycle Model

- **Me2B Commitment Deal**
- **Sign up for account**
- **Commitment**
- **Deterioration**
- **Termination**

- **Acquaintance**
- **No Me2B Commitment**
  - Anonymous
- **Me2B Commitment**
  - Remembered, Recognized, Responded To
- **No Me2B Commitment**
  - Anonymous
Me2B Relationship Lifecycle Model

Acquaintance

Buildup

Sign up for account

Commitment

Deterioration

Termination

No Me2B Commitment
Anonymous

No Me2B Commitment
Anonymous

Me2B Commitment
Remembered, Recognized, Responded To

Anonymous Transaction

Logged-in Transaction
Notice & Consent does not align with the Me2B ethos.
User-asserted preferences & permissions.
• I don't know what information I'm giving
- I don't know what information I'm giving
- I don’t know who I'm giving information to
- I don't know what information I'm giving
- I don't know who I'm giving information to
- I don't know how the information is monetized
I don't know what information I'm giving
I don’t know who I'm giving information to
I don't know how the information is monetized
I don't have a choice in the matter
Key Takeaways
- **Me2B Relationships**
  - Me2B Legal Relationship
  - Me2P Experiential Relationship
    - Digital brand agents
  - Me2T Technology Enabler Relationships
    - Stacked technology
  - B2B Hidden Affiliates
    - Invisible forced relationships
  - Me2B Relationship Lifecycle Model
- **Multiple Digital Commitments**
  - Me2B Commitment
  - Promotional Commitment
  - Loyalty Commitment
  - Consented Pseudonymous Commitment

- **Me2B Deals**
  - One-off
  - Me2B Commitment Deal
▪ Me2B is an ethical foundation
  Derived from healthy, human relationship principles
  Physical world norms

▪ Me2B Commitments are profoundly different in the digital world
  Multiple touchpoints
  Digital brand agents
  Stacked technology enablers -> Stacked observers

▪ Me2B insists on respect in all touchpoints of Me2B Commitments
  Rules of Engagement

▪ Me2B ethos includes two states of experiencing technology
  Not in a Me2B Commitment
  • Respectful defaults, anonymity
  In a Me2B Commitment
Key Maxims

- Respectful Me2B Commitments benefit Me-s and B-s
- Respectful Me2B Relationships are about more than just privacy
- Anonymity as a default
- Permissions vs. consent
- TANSTAAFL
- Respectful Me2B Relationships require new tools & new legal obligations
Me2B is human rights & consumer rights for the digital world.
Thank you!

www.Me2Ba.org