

Free Commerce

The Concert Foundation Manifesto

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Commerce is one of humanity's great inventions. It lets strangers trust one another enough to exchange, and for thousands of years it has widened what people can achieve together.

The digital age was meant to make it effortless. Instead it has made commerce captive: to platforms, to proprietary systems, to intermediaries who decide who may connect, what they may see and what it costs to leave.

A supplier proves the same facts about itself to every customer, in every customer's format. A buyer rebuilds in each new system what it already built in the last. Two organisations that want to trade must first pay for their software to be introduced.

The machinery of commerce has grown more sophisticated. Commerce itself has not grown more free.

We believe it should be.

○ 01

Commerce should be free

Free to connect, to compete, to choose and to leave.

Free as in freedom, not as in price. Free of artificial dependency and of any single organisation's power to dictate how the world trades, though never free of rules, value or responsibility.

That means the smallest supplier takes part on the same technical terms as the largest enterprise. It means a better product wins because it is better, not because its maker owns the network.

Commerce belongs to its participants, not its gatekeepers.

Open standards are how freedom is built

The internet changed communication because no one needed a company's permission to connect. The web changed publishing because no one had to own the web to create on it. The shipping container changed trade because any ship, any crane and any port could handle the same box.

Each time, a shared standard settled what everyone could rely on and left everyone free to build on top of it.

Commerce needs that foundation now. It does not need another platform or another proprietary network. It needs a common language through which independent organisations, technologies and intelligent agents can find one another, negotiate, transact and cooperate – one that no participant can capture and anyone can help improve.

Interoperability should be a right, not a privilege.

Trust should travel

Today, commercial trust is established again and again, stored privately, and lost at the edge of each system.

We want identity that can be verified without surrendering control. Qualifications, credentials and reputation that move with the organisations that earned them. Rules that are transparent and decisions that are accountable. Businesses that hold their own information and decide who sees it.

Trust should be portable, verifiable and earned.
It should be infrastructure, not a monopoly.

Intelligence should widen opportunity

Intelligent agents are beginning to find opportunities, weigh alternatives, negotiate terms and execute transactions on behalf of people and organisations. Machines will trade with machines.

This could release extraordinary productivity. It could also hand unprecedented power to whoever controls the systems those agents must pass through.

We reject the idea that intelligent commerce must be owned by a handful of platforms. Agents should be able to work across organisational boundaries, whoever built them and whatever technology runs them.

And every agent should carry its authority with it: who it acts for, what it may do, and where its mandate ends. Its actions governed. Its decisions explainable. Its accountability traceable to the people it answers to.

Intelligence should serve the participants in commerce, not become their new gatekeeper.

Compete on value. Cooperate on standards.

We believe in markets, in enterprise, in invention and in the rewards of building something better. We have no wish to eliminate commercial platforms or diminish commercial success. We want success to depend on the value delivered, not the dependency imposed.

Let thousands of platforms flourish. Let them compete on performance, service, intelligence, security and imagination. Let networks

interconnect without giving up their independence. Let buyers and suppliers choose freely, and change their minds.

Competition belongs above the standard, not over control of it.

○ 06

Beyond independence

Dependence is where much of commerce stands today: participants tied to platforms they cannot afford to leave.

Independence is the first step out. Every organisation and every platform should be able to stand on its own – holding its own information, making its own choices, free to walk away.

But independence is not the destination. A platform that stands alone still trades alone.

The destination is interdependence: platforms and participants that could each stand alone, choosing to rely on one another because together they can do what none could do apart.

What separates this from dependence is simple: everyone is free to leave, and chooses to stay. That is possible only where the terms of cooperation are shared, open and owned by no one.

Everyone is free to leave, and chooses to stay.

That is what a standard is for.

○ 07

Built in the open

The future of commerce should not be designed behind closed doors. It should be built in public, by organisations willing to cooperate while

they compete: buyers and suppliers, entrepreneurs and enterprises, developers, governments and institutions, across borders and industries.

We welcome those who want to build commercial services on this foundation, and those who want to challenge them.

No one should need permission to build. No one's information should move without theirs.

And progress should benefit more than those who arrived first.

○ 08

Our commitment

Concert Foundation exists to help make this real.

We begin with procurement – where organisations find, qualify and contract with one another, and where the cost of fragmentation is hardest to ignore. Through SIGNET and the open standards we steward, we are laying shared foundations for governed, intelligent, interoperable commerce.

We will not become the platform through which everyone must trade.

We will hold no preferential relationship with any operator, including those closest to us.

We will do our work in the open, record what we decide and what we decline, and claim only what we can show.

We will pursue openness with trust, innovation with accountability, decentralisation with governance, and technological progress with human agency.

And we will judge our success not by how much commerce we control, but by how much we help set free.

The future is not another walled garden. It is connected markets, trusted participants, independent platforms that rely on one another by choice, and intelligent agents acting under accountable authority.

We are not here to
build another gate.

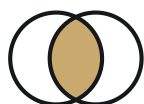
We are here to make sure
no one owns the road.

Free commerce.

Concert Foundation

Open standards. Open markets. Open opportunity.

concert.foundation



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