

# Minimal Global Broadcast

DINRG @ IETF 117, San Francisco  
July 25, 2023

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**“Let the Platforms Burn”**

Cory Doctorow  
writer, blogger, activist



**“Don’t burn the lighthouse”**

Christian Tschudin  
researcher, decentralist

~~Facebook~~ Mastodon

Where do you go when Twitter is burning?  
How will others know where you went?



The “where can I be found” question ...

# Rendezvous is the biggest problem in networking

Definition: *“Task of two or more identically programmed agents converging from different initial states to a particular point.”*

Everyday examples:

- ‘date in a huge park’ dilemma: stay put to be found, or start searching?
- chat between two radio amateurs: which frequency, modulation, time?

Platforms “solve” this problem:

- member lookup (if you are a member)
- asynchronous communication

If a platform burns, users have to re-solve the rendezvous problem

RENDEZVOUS  
ANGST

# Enters “Minimal Global Broadcast” (1/2)

What I learned from the re-decentralization debate:

- don't build the next rendezvous-solving platform —> it will burn, too
- don't turn existing platforms (DNS?) into the-mother-of-all-platforms —> governments and bad actors love single points of failures

Decentralization is about dis-intermediation:

- always have a fallback solution w/o intermediaries (exists most of the time)
- use platforms, if you wish, but the fallback solution is your insurance policy

**Goal of MGB: Solve the rendezvous problem without platforms**

# Enters “Minimal Global Broadcast” (2/2)

MGB is an entitlement, not a platform:

**“Each human shall be entitled to globally broadcast 200 Bytes per month”**

Platforms come and go away — the entitlement will stay.

- claim your right to use shortwaves, cross oceans without intermediaries
- use the platform of your choice to update your 200B/m, it must be free
- handover your 200B/m to an airship captain, she posts them landing in Paris

You are not entitled to a *specific way* - but if you have a way to do MGB, you cannot be denied your rights.

# Why 200B of novelty per month, how to use them?

With 200B/m you can:

- announce a new social media handle
- announce a new public key or DID, including crypto signature
- announce a stay in a remote cabin (give addr of daughter for urgent com)
- update your relatives after an earthquake or from a war zone

Why only 200B/m? Governments don't like free communication

- century-old: harsh restrictions on what radio amateurs are allowed to do
- remember the ban of strong crypto in the 1990ies

But 200B/m are harmless, not useful to organize a revolution ..

# Isn't Global Broadcast illusionary?

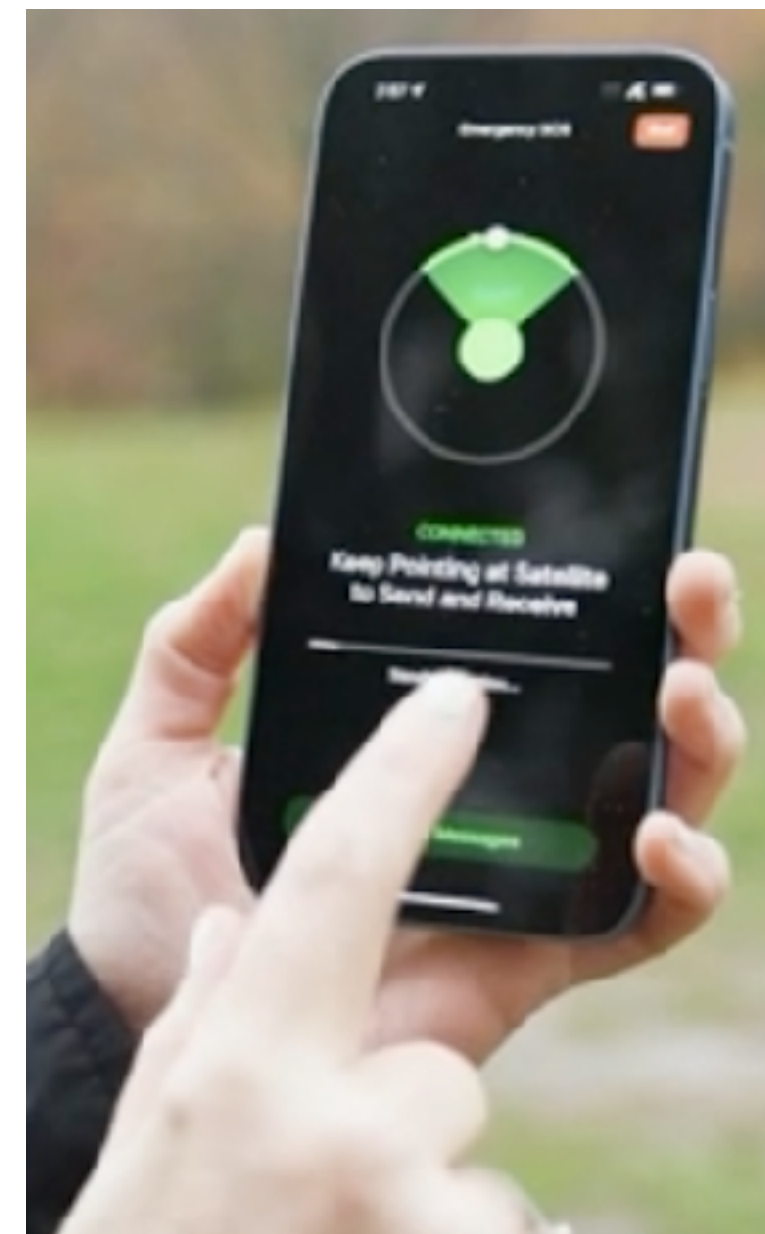


- a) **Minimal Global Broadcast** has low overall volume: <math><2\text{TB}/\text{m}</math> for all humanity
- b) Global broadcast exists today, in special sectors e.g.,

## Certificate Transparency (RFC 9162)

- globally collect all issued TLS server certificates
- fully replicate (broadcast) the logs to independent DBs  
*because* trust-wise, a mother-of-all-platforms is a no-go
- the trust industry pays up for this

- c) MGB cost for citizen? Guesstimate: <math><\\$5</math> for shortwave device, *and* claim Apple's satellite emergency channel for MGB



# Summary

- Rendezvous problem creates a gradient in favor of central platforms
- Don't fight this with an Uber platform, or a central lighthouse
- Instead: each citizen allowed to operate their own lighthouse, remain visible



**Minimal Global Broadcast** is an indispensable seed for a decentral Internet:  
let's start writing an RFC for the MGB use case, a packet format

# Questions and Comments?



**“Let the Platforms Burn”**



**“Don’t burn the lighthouse”**