

trust.txt the Organization Trust Relationship Protocol

[Organization Trust Relationship Protocol](#)

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Motivation

- *The credibility of any organization, represented through its online presence (websites and social media) is often difficult to ascertain without significant research and even then, can still be obscure*
- *trust.txt is based on the old adage, “you are known by the company you keep”*
- *Providing a standard protocol for any entity to declare the relationship among its own websites, as well as with other entities (e.g., trade associations, suppliers, social media accounts, etc.) which can enhance the credibility of an entity, particularly when those relationships are reciprocated*
- <https://datatracker.ietf.org/doc/draft-org-trust-relationship-protocol/>

Background – Specification

- *trust.txt is a simple text file installed under / .well-known/*
- *Entries are <attribute> = <value> pairs*
- *Multiple entries per attribute are permitted, with 2 exceptions)*

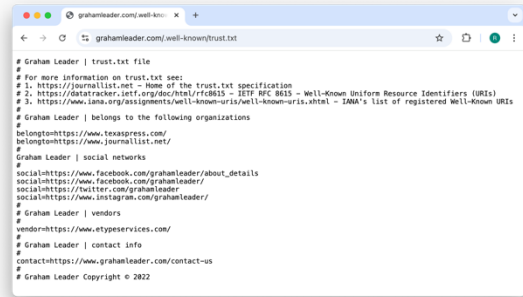
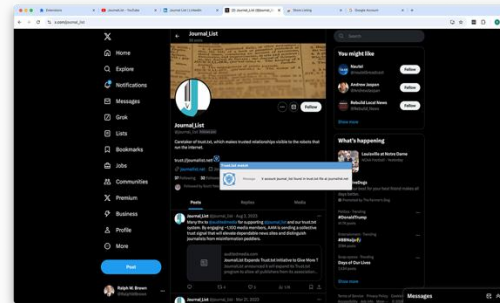
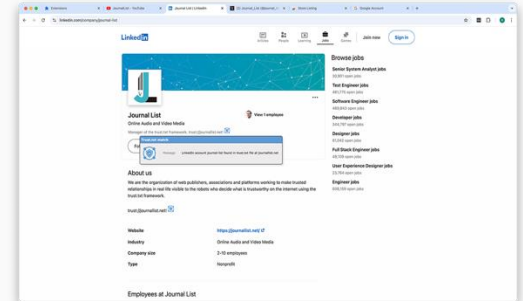
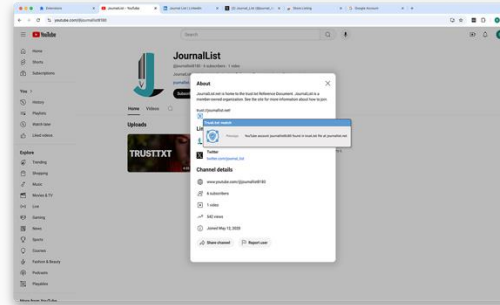
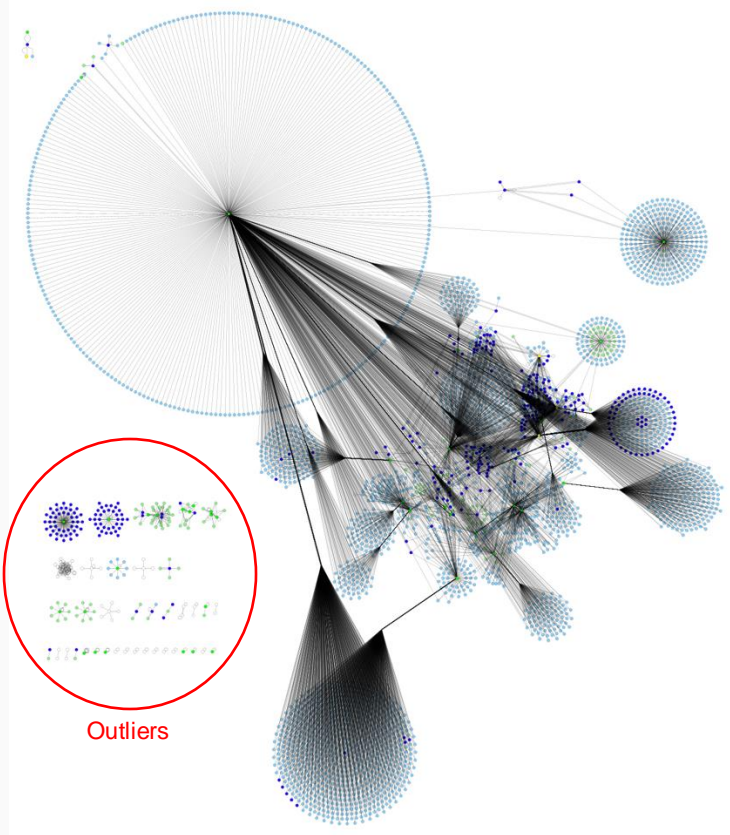
Attribute	Reciprocal
control=<url of controlled website>	controlledby=<url of controlling website>*
member=<url of member's website>	belongto=<url of trade association's website>
vendor=<url of vendor's website>	customer=<url of customer's website>
social=<uri of social network page>	trust://<home domain>! <= Trust URI
contact=<url>	(contact information, e.g., url, mailto:, or tel:)
disclosure=<url>	(privacy & cookie policies, terms & conditions, etc.)
datatrainingallowed=[yes no]*	(anticipate adopting aipref's work)

**Only one instance of these attributes is recommended*

Background – Current Status

- *trust.txt is a well-known resource registered with [IANA](#)*
- *There are 480 trust.txt files in the wild as of March 9, 2025*
- *There are 4,620 referenced websites contained in these trust.txt files*
- *The Well-Known Resource Index (<https://well-known.dev>) includes trust.txt along with ads.txt, robots.txt, and security.txt (among others)*
- *Alliance for Audited Media's ([AAM](#)) Media Signal Select service (<https://auditedmedia.com/about/press/aam-launches-media-signal-select>) includes trust.txt as a signal*
- *[Wikidata](#) is using trust.txt to identify and map news media organizations*

Background – Social Graph, Browser Extension, trust.txt file



Hoped-for dispatch outcome

Do not believe that this ID falls within the charter of existing WGs:

- *Request to publish as AD-sponsored, like robots.txt & security.txt*