

Good evening ladies and gentlemen. It is May 7th 2022, and this is the 7at7 series broadcasting from L200 in the center of Zurich, in person; and from pEp foundation's BigBlueButton server, online.

Every 7th of the month at 7pm, we offer an experimental news program about the digital world, and a special topic on digital empowerment.

“We” is a coalition of organizations, like the ISOC Switzerland Chapter, the pEp foundation, NetHood, CIRCE, Digitale Gesellschaft, CCC Switzerland, SGMK, and more.

The big news in the digital world for this month is of course the Twitter buyout by Elon Musk, which brought the discussion of possible alternatives to centralized in the foreground.

And the path toward such credible alternatives will be our special topic today, a discussion between experts on what we call the “Really Simple Federation”. An extension of the old school RSS protocol that would allow people to create aggregators of content online even if this is hosted on small servers in places like L200.

But let's take first a quick look on some reactions to the big news of the month.

Some cannot stop laughing while others seriously state that Elon Musk's purchase of Twitter is for good. There was even a poll amongst American voters who agree that all is fine!

Who wouldn't want an edit button on twitter to correct their spelling mistakes?

If BBC reports on the experiments of twitter to create an edit button, imagine how important all the design details of these platforms are for our lives. And then think who has control over them.

But Twitter reassures advertises Musk won't make the platform more of a toxic hell-hole than it already is.

It all looks more and more like a comedy, while Elon Musk says he is serious about converting Twitter headquarters into a homeless shelter.

It all looks like a hollywood comedy, with big actors like Bill Gates who doubts Musk's Twitter buy and Bezos who

worries about the effects of this development in China's content policy.

QAnon hopes to be allowed access again in Twitter and LGBTQ+ Twitter users contemplate exit.

Others like the Electric Frontier Foundation try to translate the big statements of freedom of speech to concrete policies that take such statements seriously.

And others start already searching for alternatives like the great Mastodon platform. Even the European Union created an account.

Mastodon is great! But, it aims to an ethical technical solution to provide a similar experience with Twitter.

The alternative we will discuss today, starts from another point of departure, the early days of the Internet when Internet users were creating content on their own web platforms, the so-called blogs.

At that time, we were using the RSS protocol, meaning Really Simple Syndication, to collect all interesting content in one place, e.g., our email client.

But it was very difficult to filter resulting to overloading of information. Then Facebook and Twitter came for a rescue and filter everything for us.

In short, the Really Simple Federation concept wants to take back the filtering process and make it a collective and transparent endeavour, while leaving as simple as possible and as distributed as possible the content creation process.

Yes, we can participate in free, libre, and open source social media platforms by just adding posts on your own web site, built with wordpress, grav, or whatever.

Let's see how this can become possible, with our first round of expert discussion on the topic ...

CIRCE and NetHood are very active in this area in the context of the project, C4R, Cultures for Resilience.

Karlo? What do you think?