



Digital Identity: Apple's creeping introduction of the "digital ID" as a control instrument

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It's a classic tactic of the big tech giants: features aren't announced as revolutionary innovations, but rather hidden almost casually in the support pages. Apple has now done exactly that with the "Digital ID" in Apple Wallet.

The "Digital ID" in Apple Wallet, originally touted as a convenient alternative to government-issued IDs for air travel, has now become the central control tool for accessing online services. As *Reclaim The Net* [demonstrates in a detailed analysis](#), it can now be used to prove that someone is "over 18"—not just at airport security, but directly with Apple itself. Apple has now enabled the Digital ID function in Wallet for age verification—for example, when creating an Apple account, updating iOS, adjusting security settings, or downloading apps rated 18+. Initially, this uses US passport data, but the direction is clear: every user will eventually have to digitally prove their identity and age. No press release, no fanfare—simply implemented quietly in the background.

From convenience to duty

What's being called "age verification" is in reality the development of a global digital identity infrastructure. Apple, Google, and Meta are not the drivers of this development—they are the willing accomplices of legislators in the US, UK, Australia, and especially the EU.

The platforms are building this architecture faster than the law requires because they are pursuing a strategic goal: whoever controls the "identity rails" controls access to the internet. If the operating system manufacturer verifies identity, it becomes the indispensable gatekeeper for every startup, every service, and every website. It is the transformation of the internet from an open space to a closed, controlled system.

The EU as a pioneer of total digital ID

This development is already well advanced in the European Union. While the US is still grappling with a patchwork of state laws, Brussels is already working on a comprehensive solution. The EU is currently preparing its own ["age verification framework"](#), which is intended to go hand in hand with the **EUDI wallet** (European Digital Identity Wallet).

The consequences for Europe are disastrous:

- **Loss of anonymity:** Under the guise of "protecting minors," online anonymity is being systematically dismantled. Every click, every app download, and every visit to an "age-restricted" website (which could soon encompass anything not politically acceptable) is linked to the user's digital identity.
- **State surveillance by design:** The EU Wallet is designed to combine government-issued IDs, health data, and payment information into a single system. If Apple and Google integrate this infrastructure into their wallets at the operating system level, we will be surrendering the last bastion of our privacy.
- **From the "Online Safety Act" to total surveillance:** Laws like the *UK's Online Safety Act* or the planned EU framework enforce this verification. Technology is merely the tool; politics is the architect of digital unfreedom.

The trap of "compliance"

The industry argues that it merely needs to ensure "compliance" (legal conformity). But in reality, it uses regulatory pressure to establish its own systems as the indispensable standard. A startup that cannot build its own identity verification system is inevitably forced to connect to the Apple or Google infrastructure – and thus pays the price of total dependence.

What is currently voluntary at Apple will soon become mandatory in the EU. In April 2026, the European Commission finalized its own age verification app (also known as a "mini-wallet") and approved its imminent rollout. It is fully interoperable with the EU Digital Identity Wallet (EUDI Wallet / eIDAS 2.0), which must be implemented in every member state by the end of 2026. Citizens will be able to use it to prove their age (e.g., "over 18") without disclosing their full date of birth or other data – supposedly in a "privacy-friendly" manner.

In reality, this opens the door to comprehensive age and identity verification across the entire internet. The consequences for Europe are dramatic. With the Digital Services Act (DSA) and national child protection laws, platforms are forced to demonstrate effective age verification – otherwise, they face hefty fines. EUDI wallets and the new age verification app provide precisely the infrastructure for this: Every access to social media, porn sites, gaming platforms, or age-restricted content will henceforth be routed through a central digital identity. Anonymity online? A thing of the past. Instead, a seamless surveillance system is emerging, in which Apple, Google, and others act as private gatekeepers, controlling the flow of data.

What remains to be done?

As [Reclaim The Net](#) aptly recommends: Anyone who wants to retain even a shred of digital sovereignty must rigorously disable the "personalization" and "tracking" options in their accounts – including those of Apple and Google. But we shouldn't be under any illusions: As long as we use the hardware and operating systems of these corporations, we are part of their data collection ecosystem.

The introduction of digital ID is not technological progress. It is the installation of a checkpoint that each of us will have to pass through sooner or later. EU policy is paving the way for this and selling us the loss of our freedom as "security." Anyone who believes that this infrastructure will only be used for age verification has failed to grasp the lessons of recent years. The digital prison is not built with walls—it is installed with convenient apps and "age-appropriate" certificates.