



**ETHICAL BY
DESIGN**

The Internet Was Meant for Trust

*What Tim Berners-Lee Tried to Build — And What We
Must Reclaim*

"The web isn't broken ... but we do need to claim it back."

Sir Tim Berners-Lee (creator of the internet)



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Welcome

The internet wasn't created for algorithms, ad funnels, or manipulative growth tactics.

It was created as a place of openness, collaboration, and trust.

At the centre of it all was **Sir Tim Berners-Lee** — the man who invented the World Wide Web in 1989, and whose original vision has quietly been overwritten by profit-first platforms.

This case study explores what he actually wanted...

... and why **ethical entrepreneurs today have a rare opportunity to course-correct.**

The Origin of the Web

In the late 1980s, while working at CERN in Switzerland, Tim Berners-Lee envisioned a system that would allow scientists around the world to share knowledge freely.

He called it: **"a universal space for connection."**

His core principles included:

- **Openness** — No central authority or gatekeeper
- **Decentralisation** — Everyone could access and contribute freely
- **Permissionless innovation** — No one had to "earn the right" to build or speak
- **Universal access** — Knowledge as a shared human right

"This is for everyone." — Tim Berners-Lee, 2012 Olympics Opening Ceremony



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What Went Wrong

In the decades since, the Web's original values have been buried under:

- Algorithmic control and surveillance capitalism
- Centralised platforms that monetise manipulation
- Business models that prioritise growth over trust
- Echo chambers, misinformation, and exploitation of user data

In 2019, Berners-Lee said he was “*devastated*” by what the Web had become — a system now driven by **commercial distortion** and **distrust**.

Now we say:

“Your journey is already inspiring. Now let others help to it ripple it out and fix what has become broken.”



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A New Ethical Movement

Rather than walk away, Berners-Lee launched a global initiative called **The Contract for the Web**, urging governments, companies, and individuals to rebuild on three pillars:

1. **Respect for Human Rights**
2. **Responsibility for Technology**
3. **Accountability for Outcomes**

He continues to advocate for a “mid-course correction” — one led not by institutions, but by those who care.

Now we say:

“We are proud to continue with his quest, and honour his legacy.”



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Why This Matters to You

If you've ever felt like today's online business world is **out of alignment**, you're not alone — you're right.

Your discomfort with hype, tactics, and “growth at all costs” isn't a weakness. It's your ethical compass working.

And your willingness to rebuild differently — through **trust, transparency, and truth-telling** — makes you part of a legacy Berners-Lee hoped for, but couldn't enforce.

The future of the internet was always meant to be *in our hands*.

Final Thought:

This isn't just a Case Study.

It's a reminder that the digital world wasn't designed to erode values — it was hijacked.

Now, ethical entrepreneurs like you have a chance to take it back.

One decision. One voice. One trust-based step at a time.

“We've lost control of our personal data. The power has shifted. It's time to shift it back.”

Sir Tim Berners-Lee.