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Jackson Shaw, Senior Director of Product Management, One Identity

Identity, Diversity and Inclusion

Jackson talks about security in identity management, emphasizes the importance of user experience, and describes the IoT industry as the Wild West.

02:23	In the world of identity, foundational technology is still relevant. The dissonance comes with cloud.
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18:49	It's a truism in the identity and business world that if something makes business sense, security then becomes a secondary issue.
19:13	Diversity and inclusion: fluidity has to increase, not just with genders but industries too.

Ashwin Krishnan: [00:00:31] Another episode of the UberKnowledge podcast. With me I have Jackson Shaw from One Identity. We are day one or day zero or day or two, I don't know, of RSA.

Jackson Shaw: [00:00:43] Yes, it's hard to keep these all together.

Ashwin Krishnan: [00:00:45] I know. So Jackson, why don't you tell the audience a little bit about yourself?

Jackson Shaw: [00:00:49] Sure! As I like to say, I've been in this business for a long time. I started many years ago, but in particular, I got a new identity at a little Toronto company called Zoomit Corporation, and we were acquired by Microsoft in 1999. I had the privilege of working for Microsoft for a number of years, including the time when Microsoft was launching Active Directory, and back in 2000, no-one believed Active Directory could scale or that it would be enterprise ready. That world has completely changed. I went on from there after about five-and-a-half to six years to a small startup in Utah, which integrated UNIX and Linux systems into Active Directory because it became so popular and such a great way to manage systems. So I worked there for a while. We were acquired by Quest Software, then acquired by Dell, and then spun out of Dell and back to Quest, and now One Identity, so it seems like I've gone through a lot of job transitions, but in fact I haven't.

Ashwin Krishnan: [00:01:49] [Laughs]

Jackson Shaw: [00:01:49] But it's been very exciting to be in this business from my Zoomit days, when we actually trademarked the term metadirectory, until now when it's you know identity and access governance and privileged account management and all these really cool things that are going on.

Ashwin Krishnan: [00:02:03] Cool, so that's a great segue into my first question which is in the world of identity things have moved pretty rapidly with biometrics, talking about AI, IoT.

Jackson Shaw: [00:02:14] Yeah.

Ashwin Krishnan: [00:02:15] And yet, certain things haven't changed, the Active Directory, why this dissonance, if there is any?

Jackson Shaw: [00:02:23] Yeah, I'm not sure I would call it dissonance. I certainly think that there has been some foundational work done. You know, Active Directory clearly one of them, not because I was at Microsoft at the time, but I think the adoption of things makes them industry standards, more than the fact that there's an RFC written about them. And Active Directory certainly is one of those things. When you look at something like LDAP, which University of Michigan — and I certainly knew a bunch of those guys, Tim Howard and those guys, before they went to Netscape — still foundational. I mean, people are still talking about LDAP, and people still have LDAP directories. So, I think things that have taken on this massive groundswell become standards in their own ways. They've become very useful. I don't particularly think there's a dissonance. If I was to say there's a

dissonance with any of these things, it's when you look at something like Active Directory now, you start thinking about the cloud and Azure Active Directory. How does the cloud change a lot of these things? If there's a dissonance happening now, it's probably more around that.

Ashwin Krishnan: [00:03:29] On the cloud stuff.

Jackson Shaw: [00:03:30] Yeah.

Ashwin Krishnan: [00:03:30] I want to touch upon something which I've seen very few people talk about, which is how do you turn security into a business enabler? When I say talk about it, they talk about it, but they don't really implement it.

Jackson Shaw: [00:03:43] Right.

Ashwin Krishnan: [00:03:43] It's one thing to say, "OK, you know what, security is soon going to stop saying no and start saying yes. I have seen your DarkReading article. And this was particularly resonating because it actually uses a use case. It says "A large company required users to log in to two separate VPNs, both fronted by separate MFAs, in order to remotely access basic systems. Understandably, most users end up avoiding the 10-minute log-in time and the unreliability of the VPN connections and default to calling IT when they absolutely require access. This is the customer experience. Security comes in and says, 'Hey, remote access workers, you have to go through double MFA.'" Has the industry evolved?

Jackson Shaw: [00:04:24] No.

Ashwin Krishnan: [00:04:24] That was ...

Jackson Shaw: [00:04:26] That was quick? Next question. No listen, here's what I think is so strange about this. I think there are some things that are happening, I would say maybe there's some light at the end of the tunnel, or the clouds are starting to break; however you want to put it, whatever euphemism.

> "IM itself should be a business enabler not just an IT thing."

[00:04:42] User experience is becoming a lot more important. Not just for guys like me, when there's coding going on by my development partners, but by what the users are doing themselves. And that has happened in identity, where you hear a lot of companies talking about, we want the business owners involved not just the IT guys because IM itself should be a business enabler not just an IT efficiency thing. So, I think we're seeing more user experience coming into IM. That example you gave is a great one, where clearly there wasn't enough user experience involved in that. And I mean not just the users had a bad time, but where was IT in implementing this, walking people through, and trying to see it?

[00:05:24] Then the second thing is where the security groups themselves need to be thinking about user experience you know. You're totally right, it's not just about saying yes instead of no, there's a lot more to it. You've got to be pragmatic about it. You've got to make decisions about these things in a very pragmatic way. I mean we had an experience last week at our sales kickoff where we did certification testing for everybody who attended. Only about 10 percent of them

got through the certification testing because of this exact problem around federated log in and MFA. It became so difficult for the end users and folks not knowing how to scan an OCR code. Now that's second nature for someone who owns an Apple not necessarily for an Android. So, I take the responsibility for not having enough time to do that usability and get through that. I think these things are evolving and they can't get good enough.

Ashwin Krishnan: [00:06:32] We kind of touched upon the development process. I mean, you've been a product manager for a long time. I was in my last job, too.

Jackson Shaw: [00:06:42] Yeah.

Ashwin Krishnan: [00:06:42] And sometimes the nature of product definition is so accelerated. We have a new release coming up and we're committed to launch something. And usability, at least I'll talk about my own, fell way below everything else — features, scale. The example that you mentioned brings it back front and center, but how do you sustain that? Is there a blueprint?

Jackson Shaw: [00:07:10] The blueprint I used was pretty simple. We sat down and whenever we were hiring, we looked at the budget. We looked at things and we made choices. Like when we first started looking at usability a number of years ago, the question kind of goes like this, "Jackson, we can hire two engineers or we can hire one usability person. What do you want to do?"

We heard, and I heard, enough complaints and complaints from my team and complaints from customers. I made the decision and the recommendation, let's go with the UX person, which was three or so years ago. That's led to positivity from the customers and a lot of interaction with the customer and hiring more UX people. And for the very first user group meeting we had just a couple of months ago, we brought in one of our UX people. It was one of the best

> "You've got to invest in it. You can't prioritize it way down the bottom."

sessions our customers ever attended. So, I think the key thing in my mind is you need a separate team of people that are gonna do this, and you've got to invest in it. You can't prioritize it way down the bottom beyond the features. It has to be something that's like when you develop the software, you're going to QA it, you're going to do the doc, then do the usability too. It's not an afterthought. And I think that's probably the biggest thing, too many people think of it as an afterthought as opposed to part of the development lifecycle.

Ashwin Krishnan: [00:08:19] Good. Again, you're at RSA and obviously part of 7,000+ cybersecurity companies, maybe half of them on the show floor.

Jackson Shaw: [00:08:30] Yes.

Ashwin Krishnan: [00:08:33] In your view are you seeing new-age startups that start with usability? Is there a cultural shift that you see happening, or is it still let's get the feature out, let's get the patent done, I mean, other things taking place?

Jackson Shaw: [00:08:48] I'm not sure that I can give you a gauge as to what

newer companies are doing. I think that definitely at the end of the day it's all about — depending on where you are in the lifecycle of a product, in the lifecycle of a market — it's developing and putting into the market a product that people will buy. So at the end of the day that is number one. What kills you is when you don't take usability, in my opinion, into account. Then you get competitors coming in, and they'll look at that as a silver bullet to use against you. "Look at how easy mine is.".

[00:09:24] I have this saying that I use with my developers all the time, "Sex sells." What I mean by that is if you have a sexy interface and a really nice cool looking GUI, that can sell, in some cases, a lot better than a piece of functionality, simply because the business owner sees it and goes, "Well it looks really cool, it must do the job." So, there's that other side to it too. I mean, I prefer to have both, right? The sexy capability to impress people and make it easy for people to use the product but with the features to back it up.

> *"What kills you is when you don't take usability into account."*

[00:09:54] It also depends on where you are in the world. A consumer company or a consumer product, I would expect they're thinking about usability right from day one, enterprise piece of software, maybe not so much. But like I said, when we started this conversation about usability, I think it's becoming much more important from a company and end-user perspective along with the people who are developing, like our company.

Ashwin Krishnan: [00:10:17] OK. Let's take usability a step forward.

Jackson Shaw: [00:10:20] Sure.

Ashwin Krishnan: [00:10:22] There's been a lot of vendor bashing, as expected. Saying there's too many point products out there and security manufacturers are failing us and all that.

Jackson Shaw: [00:10:28] Yes.

Ashwin Krishnan: [00:10:28] And then there's this whole concept of platform. APIs and integration and so on. Let's assume this platform approach takes off. Whether it's through your ex-employer Microsoft or it's Google, whoever. And so API has become the way transactions are enabled. So the usability or the sexy UI is really to get the attention of the budget owner, and it's not really going to be used on a daily basis. Do you see that as the path forward, especially with APIs being all the rage and assuming this whole platform nirvana takes place?

Jackson Shaw: [00:11:09] Well look, you know, you asked about APIs and the platform and microservices, which I'll take as a sort of a step towards that. I think those things are hugely important. We started building on top of Microsoft Azure a number of years ago, using their microservices to build our own microservices, our own features and capabilities in the cloud. We're starting to reap the benefits of that now because it's a build once, use many times sort of implementation. The API economy, as some people call it, I think it's hugely important, and I think the

combination of good features, good backend, the APIs and wrapping that with UX is an unbeatable combination in the long run.

Ashwin Krishnan: [00:11:57] OK. So you think both are important?

Jackson Shaw: [00:12:00] Yes, I do.

Ashwin Krishnan: [00:12:01] OK. Switching gears. You tweeted about a meeting, you see, I've done my research on you ...

Jackson Shaw: [00:12:06] Clearly, yeah.

Ashwin Krishnan: [00:12:09] … about meeting Grace Hopper when you were young and that left a lasting impression on you.

> "Good features, good backend, the APIs and wrapping that with UX is an unbeatable combination."

Jackson Shaw: [00:12:15] You know, I think I said it in the tweet, and I don't remember if I did, but it didn't make an impression then. It made a much bigger impression now while I reflect back on where we've gone and computing, since I've been lucky enough to be around from mainframe days.

Ashwin Krishnan: [00:12:33] So why don't we continue the thought? Where are we today, and why did this meeting from many years ago cause such an impact. What should you and the community do about it?

Jackson Shaw: [00:12:46] I think what happened was I just happened to be reading a little bit about her but then seeing a lot more about women in technology. And the fact that just in technology in general and in STEM, we don't have enough women and enough girls in lower schools interested in engineering and in the things I was interested in as a boy. I sit in meetings all the time, and it's always 95 percent men. I just think that we're not doing a good enough job. I don't know if it's we as in society or government or all of us or men or what. But I think back to those times of Grace, and all the people who came at that same time, and all the women that were involved, mathematicians and physicists and whatnot, and I just feel we're not doing a good enough job for both kids and for females. I would love to see us do more, especially here in the United States. I mean, education is so expensive. I just think we should be really doing as much as we can to get all children interested in STEM careers but especially females.

Ashwin Krishnan: [00:14:00] On the topic of getting women interested in tech, I think RSA is doing a fabulous job this year and putting a lot of effort behind it.

Jackson Shaw: [00:14:08] I'm really amazed and happy to see a lot of this going on for sure.

Ashwin Krishnan: [00:14:14] You bring up a really important point about how else should we be thinking about this? Do we have enough diversity and inclusion going on?

Jackson Shaw: [00:14:22] Yes, that's the right word, diversity.

Ashwin Krishnan: [00:14:24] Again I'm coming back to technology for a minute,

which is identity as it relates to IoT. I had an interesting conversation with a friend of mine yesterday and he was mentioning the fact, which never crossed my mind, that up until this point, until very recently, identity had a direct correlation with human population. A laptop, mobile device, a TV even.

Jackson Shaw: [00:14:48] Right.

Ashwin Krishnan: [00:14:48] And we are finally at the point where that correlation is going to break.

Jackson Shaw: [00:14:53] Right. Has broken.

Ashwin Krishnan: [00:14:56] Has broken. How does that test identity?

Jackson Shaw: [00:15:00] You want a dissonance, we were talking about dissonance earlier, that's a dissonance.

Ashwin Krishnan: [00:15:05] So what is One Identity and the industry in general doing about the onslaught?

Jackson Shaw: [00:15:11] Nowhere near enough. I'll give you a great example, my Twitter profile says my day job is identity, my night job is security, and my hobby is IoT. You know, when you think about security, you think about identity, we talked a little bit about this at the start, there are industry standards, and there are commercial standards, LDAP, Active Directory etc. The problem with IoT is that there are no actual standards around how you define an IoT's identity or the security around an IoT device. I did a presentation a couple of years about this, and my first slide was one of those old western movies with all the cowboys and the Indians. It's literally the Wild West when it comes to IoT.

> "It's literally the Wild West when it comes to IoT."

[00:15:55] I put a commercial firewall in my home to look ... I just put it in there because I thought it's better protection than what I get from whomever my internet provider is. And after two months, it's telling me that my second biggest traffic from a country perspective is, first is United States, second is China.

Ashwin Krishnan: [00:16:14] [Laughs]

Jackson Shaw: [00:16:14] So my immediate question was, what the heck is my home network doing?

Ashwin Krishnan: [00:16:17] Is it inbound or outbound?

Jackson Shaw: [00:16:18] It's both! And then you realize that you have this whole bunch of different IoT devices that are talking to China, and I'm sure legitimately, but I'm not a smart enough guy to understand exactly what's going on. I think that if I was a CIO today, or CISO, my biggest worry would be about IoT devices right now and wanting to know how I secure my network. Can I keep them separate? How do I do that? How do we secure them from being penetrated by foreign agents or just other people? It literally still is the Wild West. I think we have a long way to go yet, a long way.

Ashwin Krishnan: [00:16:53] So one last question. This came up in another session earlier today where we were talking about the self-reflection of how far we've come as an industry, and why we're making the same mistakes again.

Jackson Shaw: [00:17:05] Yes.

Ashwin Krishnan: [00:17:06] One of the panelists, I think, mentioned the fact that maybe we've learned from our mistakes, but there are newer people, like OT in particular, coming into this industry for the first time.

Jackson Shaw: [00:17:15] Well, that's such a great point. I had a tweet this past week because we're training all of our salespeople. I tweeted this picture that showed the definition of IAM and I said, I have to remember after a while that I've been doing this for so long I assume everybody knows everything that I know, and they don't. And we have to start with a basic step. I don't disagree with that. At the same point in time, it's a truism in the identity world or in the business world that if it makes business sense for somebody, security then becomes a secondary issue not the first issue. So, part of the problem is ... like for around IoT, there's huge reasons that people buy IoT devices. I have my whole summer cottage wired with IoT devices to monitor the temperature from 3,000 miles away and know when things are going south, right. And that's a big benefit to me. I don't care about the security or it's secondary to me, until we start thinking about these things a little bit more pragmatically. The business benefit of doing something will always outweigh security. You follow me?

> "The business benefit of doing something will always outweigh security."

Ashwin Krishnan: [00:18:29] Yeah.

Jackson Shaw: [00:18:29] So I agree on your first point, but I'm also saying that I think that the business benefit outweighs security, and that sometimes drives security, like we were saying about UX, to the bottom of the pile.

Ashwin Krishnan: [00:18:41] So, making one last point about distinguishing non-tech industries, who are getting tech enabled for the first time — agriculture, mining. Where does that industry get their tech talent from? If we're talking about selling to tech heads and security nerds and having a hard time keeping up, how do industries that have had no history of tech, much less knowledge of what we're talking about in security, how does that problem get solved?

Jackson Shaw: [00:19:13] Diversity and inclusion. You know that situation where somebody gets hired into the mining business that has no experience in mining. I think that fluidity has to increase not just from a male-female kind of thing but also from an industry perspective because IoT is IoT at the end of the day. It's identity and security too.

Ashwin Krishnan: [00:19:37] Cool, I think that's about a wrap.

Jackson Shaw: [00:19:39] OK!

Ashwin Krishnan: [00:19:39] It's been a great conversation.

Jackson Shaw: [00:19:40] Yeah, absolutely.

Ashwin Krishnan: [00:19:41] Hopefully, you have a great RSA.

Jackson Shaw: [00:19:44] Yes, it's always great.

Ashwin Krishnan: [00:19:45] Thanks, Jackson.

Jackson Shaw: [00:19:46] You're very welcome.