



Joint Press Release

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Howest and KBC will be launching Europe's first digital student card in the coming academic year.

The card will be stored in KBC Mobile under 'My Trustbox' and provides easy and secure access to student services and benefits.

KBC, in collaboration with Howest, the University of Applied Sciences in West Flanders, is developing the very first digital student card, designed to meet the new European identity and data standards. From the 2023/2024 academic year, all 9 500 Howest students will be able to prove they are Howest students more easily, digitally and with greater protection of privacy when visiting a cinema or theatre, making online purchases, going to a sports club or accessing a social service.

All Howest students (both those who are KBC customers and those who are not) can store and retrieve their digital student card in KBC Mobile easily and securely.

How does it work?

The student can add the digital student card (also called a verifiable credential) to KBC Mobile, after which they decide with whom they want to share this digital proof. Shops, sports services, theatres or other student facilities that want to check this will only see the information that is absolutely necessary and can easily check the correctness in an independent, privacy-friendly way using the decentralised database or blockchain. This enables someone to prove that they are a student without releasing any additional personal data. KBC is thus launching its first concrete application of digital identity. With this technology, each individual controls what data is used and under what conditions.

Karin Van Hoecke, General Manager for Digital Transformation & Data at KBC Belgium, is pleased with this collaboration: *'Howest's Applied Computer Science research group is a pioneer in web3 and blockchain. The researchers are engaged in several national and international projects focusing on new forms of data sharing and decentralised identity, one example being the European Blockchain Services Infrastructure. This unique expertise makes them the ideal partner for KBC. Students can find the digital student card in KBC Mobile under 'My Trustbox', a single central location in KBC Mobile where users*

can find, upload, securely share and manage all their digital data. As a result, he saves time. For example, in the spring we launched a service in My Trustbox that allows users to recognise smishing (SMS phishing fraud) as well as to access all their data that is available on government and other platforms. The European standards make it easier for customers to manage and exercise greater control over their data, assisted by the user-friendliness of KBC Mobile. It saves them both time and money'

Kurt Callewaert, Digital Transformation Valorisation Manager at Howest, says: 'The two partners are building on the standards and building blocks provided by the European Blockchain Services Infrastructure (as well as the European Digital Identity Wallet that is currently under development). For example, we ensure future interoperability with other wallets and other digital proof of identity or verifiable credentials locally, nationally and internationally. KBC has further expanded its existing wallet to include this new form of digital proof.'

The project fits in with Self Sovereign Identity, a concept that allows users to manage what identity data they share with third parties. Data minimisation and cryptography are used to ensure data privacy and security. Recipients can easily check the authenticity of data shared with them, leading to greater trust between parties in a digital environment. Howest and KBC are thus taking the first step towards bidding farewell to the many different documents that are used as proof today.

Learn more about this project:

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