Kim Cameron: Professional Obituary

Kim Cameron, who passed away on 30 November 2021, had an unwavering passion for humanity and technology. He blended creativity, innovation, and a relentless intellectual curiosity with a deep understanding of technology, profoundly impacting how people and organizations access and use the Internet. As a computer scientist and engineering leader, he worked since the emergence of the Internet to create a humanistic system of digital identity. Kim received many awards and accolades throughout his career for that work, all of which recognized his drive to "do the right thing," protecting privacy, user rights, and the voice of individuals.

Kim grew up in Canada, attending King's College at Dalhousie University and l'Université de Montréal, where he studied physics, sociology, and economics. Kim taught himself computer science, starting by assembling a mail-order Heathkit computer. He continued being a builder throughout his career.

In 1988 he co-founded Toronto-based Zoomit Corporation, which began building email gateways. In 1996, Kim and Zoomit introduced the metadirectory to the world, pivoting to the focus on identity management that would define his career. He moved to Seattle to join Microsoft in 1999 after it acquired Zoomit. In 2000 he became the architect of Microsoft's Active Directory, the most widely used identity technology in enterprises across the globe. As the growth of the Internet made the importance of identity increasingly evident, his role expanded to become Microsoft's Chief Identity Architect, a position he held until his retirement in 2019.

Kim possessed a great sense of humor, a commanding stage presence, and an uncanny ability to educate. He communicated his vision by speaking at countless industry events over the years, including most Burton Group/Gartner Catalyst conferences, European Identity Conferences, Identiverse, and, only four weeks before his passing, the TechVision Chrysalis Conference. He loved to share his passion for digital identity ideas and technologies, which were intertwined with his mission to better the human experience.

Throughout his career, Kim focused on building an "identity metasystem" that worked across vendors, technologies, and political boundaries. He introduced the concept of "claims" so entities in the system could trust the assertions of other entities for different things and to different extents – a significant building block for what became cloud computing.

Kim may be best known for writing the [Laws of Identity](#) in 2004. He recognized early on that the misuse of personally identifiable information would put individuals and organizations at risk. In response, he drew up a document that continues to influence both technologists and regulators across the globe and which Microsoft adopted as its guide to innovation. Perhaps more than anyone at Microsoft—or any big company—Kim constantly pushed toward openness, inclusivity, compatibility, cooperation, and the need for individual agency and scale.

Over the past decade, Kim expanded upon the concepts embodied in the laws and championed innovations that would put users in control of their own identity, solving privacy and security problems for both individuals and organizations. The concept of decentralized or self-sovereign identity became a significant focus for Kim during and after his tenure at Microsoft. We have yet to realize the full impact and influence of the laws and his other contributions to technology. His work and a lifetime of accomplishments in the identity space are the legacies he leaves for future generations to build on and develop.

Kim was much more than one of the most impactful technologists of our time. He was a great musician, teacher (in French and English), thinker, epicure, traveler, father, husband, and friend – a true Renaissance man. As a companion, he was always fun, curious, passionate, caring, and gracious. Above all he will be remembered for his warmth and generosity, his humility, and an ever-present sense of humour. Kim Cameron will be missed by all that had the honour of knowing him.

Kim passed away with his family at his side on 30 November 2021. Kim's family would like you to consider donating to the First Nations Technology Council. You can learn more and donate https://technologycouncil.ca/. Condolences may be forwarded through www.humphreymiles.com.