

The Agent Stack and Standards

We built the internet for humans. Not for agents.

JUNE 2026 bots passed humans — 57% of web requests (Cloudflare)

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(a lot)

Six questions every agent must answer



Who are you?

ERC-8004



Are you allowed in?

Web Bot Auth



How do you pay?

x402



Did you do the work?

Flashtestations



How do you use tools?

MCP

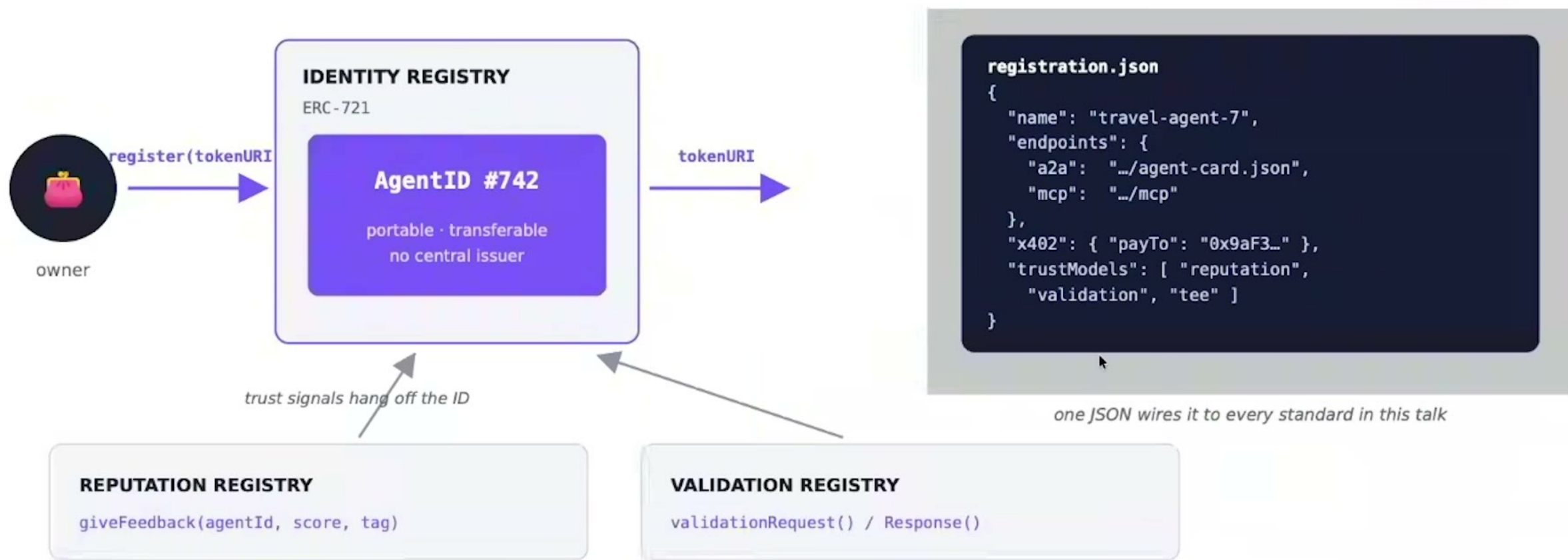


How do you talk to agents?

A2A

Identity — ERC-8004

An agent = a token + its receipts.



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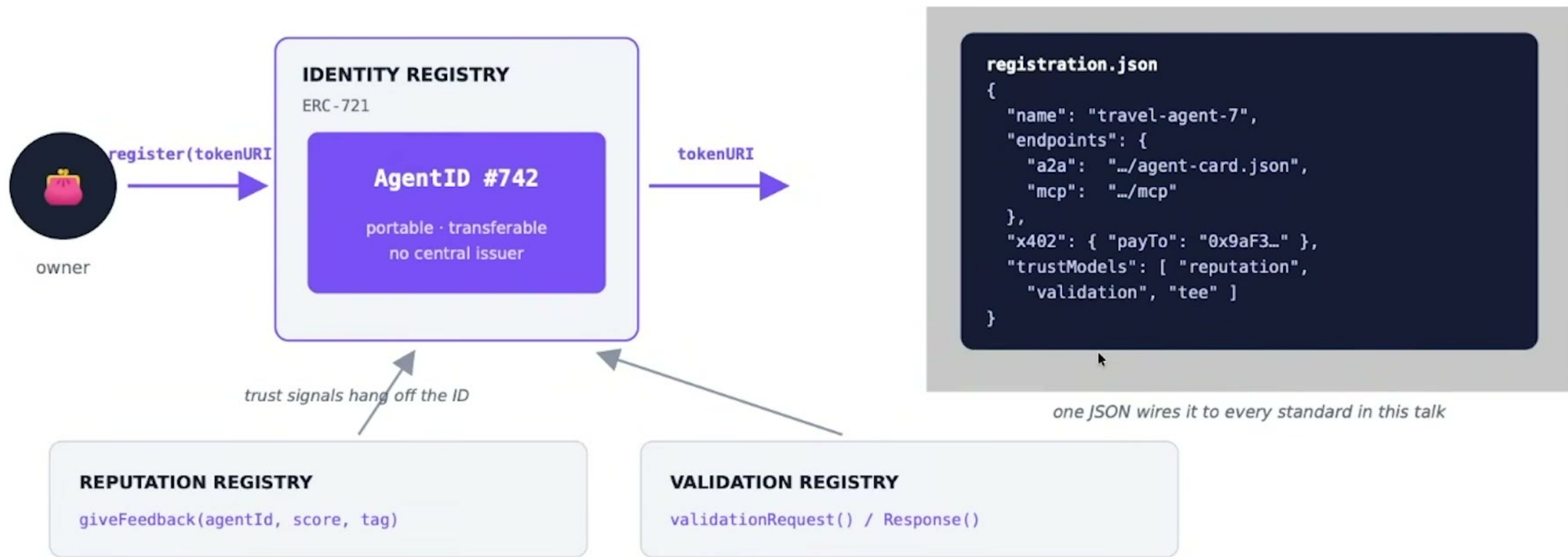


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Access — Web Bot Auth

The User-Agent header lies. Signatures don't.

```
GET /article HTTP/1.1
Host: news.example.com

User-Agent: Mozilla/5.0 (compatible; Googlebot)

Signature-Agent: "https://agent.example.com"
Signature-Input: sig1="@authority"
                 "signature-agent"); keyid="ed25519-key-1";
                 created=1753968000; expires=1753968600
Signature: sig1=k2qGT5srn20Gb0IDzQ88hAqPY...
```

✗ anyone can type this

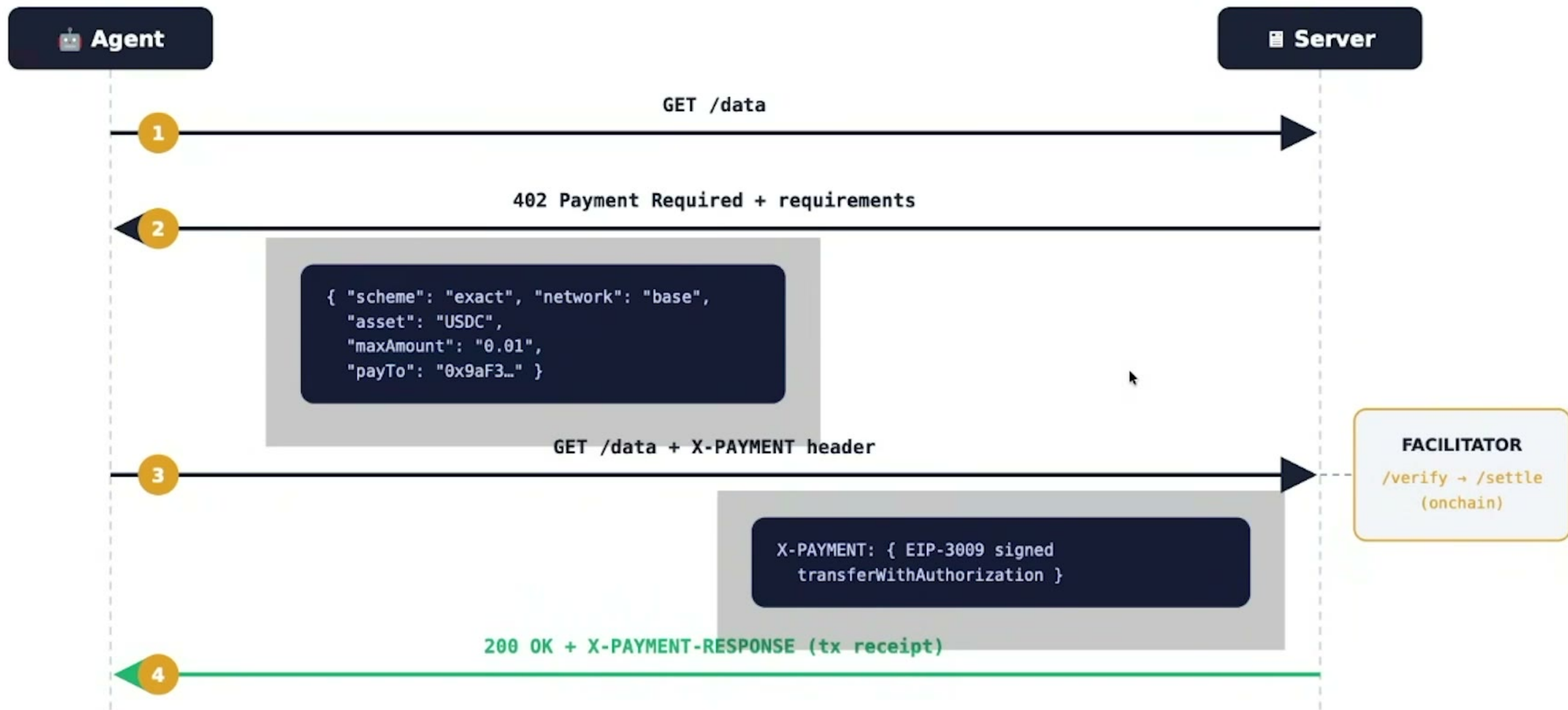
✓ Ed25519, verified per request

🔑 origin fetches the public key at
[/.well-known/http-message-signatures-directory](#)

RFC 9421 · math, not vibes

Payments — x402

HTTP 402: reserved 1997. Used 2026.



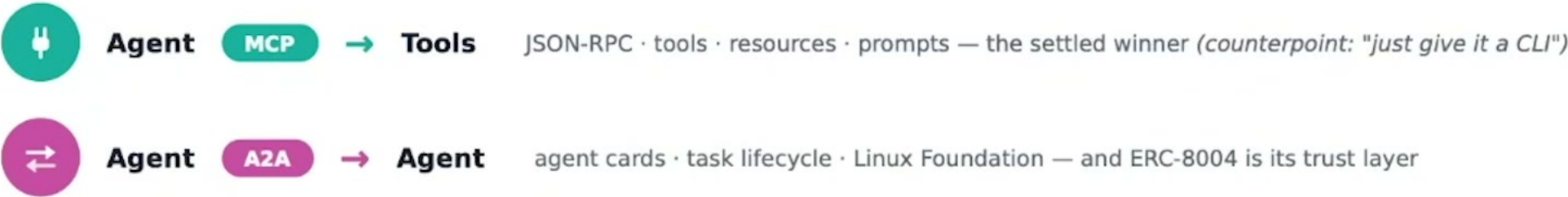
Proof — Flashtestations

The chip signs. The chain checks.



Flashbots · first prod use: proving Unichain blocks follow fair ordering · OpenZeppelin-audited · = the TEE trust model 8004 was built to receive

Protocols — MCP & A2A



The landscape — every layer is contested

Layer	Open standard	Alternatives
Identity	ERC-8004 (draft ERC)	MS Entra Agent ID · DIDs/VCs
Access	Web Bot Auth (IETF WG)	Okta/Auth0 agent auth · OAuth ext.
Payment rail	x402 (Linux Foundation)	Stripe MPP · card networks
Payment authz	—	Google AP2 → FIDO Alliance
Checkout	—	OpenAI + Stripe ACP (beta)
Proof	Flashtestations	zkML · other TEE stacks
Tools / peers	MCP · A2A (Linux Foundation)	CLIs · vendor protocols

Open questions — reputation & trust

Trust?

ERC-8004



Web Bot Auth



x402



Flashtestations



MCP



A2A



Whom do I pick?

no scoring standard — 8004 records feedback, doesn't say what a score *means* · sybils · cold-start



Whom do I allow?

no whitelist standard — which agents may act for me at all



How much do they get?

money-scoping is coming (AP2 signed mandates) · data-scoping has nothing

We can verify agents. We can't yet trust them.



One model you trust. A thousand you don't have to.

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