

To EURIM Members and Observers
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The Information
Society Alliance
EURIM



EURIM Newsletter January 2010

1) Setting the Information Society Agendas for the Next Government

Programmes for the Class of 2010

The interplay between candidates at the event on 10th December on “Smarter Britain” was quite fiery at times, but the splits were not along party lines. The sharpest exchange was on whether we pay too much attention to on-line lobby groups who are not representative of voters. The meeting was also noteworthy for an example of the potential speed of return on investment from the innovative use of mass-market products: e.g. payback inside a fortnight from health visitors using Blackberries to update records and make bookings while making home visits instead of returning to the office to do so. This has led to a suggestion that postmen carry data mobiles to provide a first point of on-line contact for those who are housebound and unable to use on-line services because of limited sight and hearing.

On 16th December we helped the Industry and Parliament Trust with invitations for a presentation of their analysis of the backgrounds of candidates for those seats most likely to change hands at the next election, <http://www.ipt.org.uk/Research/PPCsBusinessBackgroundsAnAnalysis.htm>. Nearly half have experience of business or financial services (rather more than the current house). We have just sent out invitations for a half-day IPT seminar on 3rd March on the importance of ICT in Parliament and to aid the economy. This event is also intended to help introduce candidates to the IPT. Please e-mail Jessicacampbell@ipt.org.uk for details. We are discussing co-operation on additional events both before and after the General Election.

Controversy over proposals in the Digital Britain Bill for helping enforce intellectual property rights has sparked suggestions for an additional event: on how we could/should protect content that is being distributed over the Internet, including tracking and tracing those whose traffic is in dispute or illegal. There are many claims as to what can and cannot be done but these are often based more on the business models or political positions of the protagonists than on an understanding of the underlying technologies. Given that several of those standing for election have relevant professional backgrounds and are better informed than most of those lobbying them, it has been suggested we assemble a balanced mix of authoritative speakers, including those working on systems to support new and different business models for distributing content over the Internet. Please e-mail eurim@eurim.org if you would be interested in such an event.

2) Setting the Information and Identity Governance Agendas

Is your information fit for purpose?

Recent studies by the Audit Commission have shown clearly that performance correlates with quality of information management, alongside massive variations in information accuracy in health authorities and police forces, let alone other agencies. We are therefore working with the Audit Commission on a high level round table, on the afternoon of 22nd February, on the political implications of these findings.

The aim is to begin that event with material on the scale and nature of the problems and consequences (from avoidable death and suffering to wasted time and resources), to give some examples of good practice and then to have a discussion on what needs to happen, who should be responsible for

ensuring that it does and how success should be measured and monitored. Please e-mail eurim@eurim.org if you would like to contribute examples of good practice and of the benefits achieved from improving performance.

Can you afford to rely on security by afterthought not design?

On 8th January the subgroup on Security by Design discussed feedback to its draft report from a wide range of expert reviewers. The comments triggered discussion as to whether the report was “merely” summarising good practice for a non-technical audience, or was truly innovative: the first attempt to bring together good practice across the board (people processes as well as technology, resilience as well as security, private sector and civilian as well as military) and put it into high level, political context. There was, however, strong support from the reviewers for the approach and agreement that publication is only the first step in achieving the objective: fundamental change in market behaviour, both public and private sector.

A number of reviewers recommended adding material to explicitly reference existing initiatives and remove ambiguities and potential misunderstandings. The idea of a single, succinct report has therefore been replaced by a longer report with a 4 by A4 summary and a one side “politician’s crib sheet”, (as for the guide on good practice in procurement). These will be backed up by a “resource website”, linking to a selection of authoritative sources. The aim is to have the longer version on the EURIM website, to enable widespread peer review, before the end of the month. We will then “launch” the crib sheet at an event for Parliamentary Candidates in late February or early March.

For me the most frightening aspect of this study has been to learn not only how reliant our society is on systems of known vulnerability but also that the risks are increasing as ill-considered economies within delivery silos get in the way of good practice and increase overall cost and vulnerability.

Using governance frameworks to drive a rationalisation of public and private Identity systems

Those reporting to Ministers and Main Board Directors are under increasing pressure to ensure their organisation is not the next to be subject to media headlines after a failure in their identification processes has helped lead to death, suffering, fraud, waste or other public embarrassment. But too many are obsessed with finding a holy grail, as opposed to governance routines for interoperability between operational systems that work and those that may, or may not, be used in the future. This is not just a corporate process, as in 'identity management'. It involves externally set values, standards, contracts and regulations relating to public policy. Moreover, in the public sector it also needs to link, via, for example voter registration, to democratic accountability - at a time when governments will have to ensure that they really do have public support for difficult decisions.

On 3rd February the Identity Governance Subgroup will reconvene to agree objectives and terms of reference, building on the government's adoption of federated identity principles as detailed in “Safeguarding Identity Strategy” (http://www.ips.gov.uk/cps/rde/xchg/ips_live/hs.xml/1151.htm). The meeting will be chaired by Philip Dunne MP (also chair of the all-party Corporate Governance Group). Nick Palmer MP (with a long standing interest in ID issues) also plans to be present. One of the aims of the meeting is to agree a leadership team (including users of ID systems: public, private and voluntary sector) that will use the period of the election campaign to address the governance policy issues that will need to be handled by the next government (of whatever complexion). These include the means of handling issues of responsibility, liability, accountability and interoperability across civil-military, public-private and international boundaries as well as across departmental or application boundaries - including topics like voter registration.

The Subgroup will be asked to address the issues causing concern to the policy teams of the main parties, with industry players expected to propose the governance frameworks within which they would like to operate over the next decade or so. We therefore need to assemble a balanced team, including officials, users and suppliers, for whom a smooth transition to an efficient, low-overhead regime is more important than proposing yet more research, consultancy or policy studies. If you would like to participate in this exercise, please e-mail eurim@eurim.org.

3) Setting a Realistic “More for Less” Public Service Delivery Agenda

Ensuring good practice is understood, encouraged and followed: from the top down

On 12th January the group reviewed objectives for the visit to Holland on 4th February to compare experience and plan how to harvest experience from other EU member states. The group was also told of the need to harvest the growing experience now available within the UK with regard to planning and procuring shared services, including networks. The problems in Cornwall, where all but one of the bidders are said to have withdrawn, were said to be an example of failure to learn from experience elsewhere. A more detailed discussion is expected on the 18th January when the Communications Group (see below) is due to receive a report on progress with assembling material for candidates and will be asked to agree terms of reference for the planned exercise on guidance and action, including how to address the alleged fiscal and regulatory obstacles to producing viable business cases for affordable world-class local access.

Co-operation with IPT and others on a possible exchange programme for MPs and Candidates

EURIM and the Industry and Parliament Trust have agreed to explore co-operation: please e-mail eurim@eurim.org if you would be interested in helping plan or participate in exchange programmes whether as an ICT supplier or user, or as an MP after you are elected or re-elected.

Rationalising the procurement of security and putting it into the mainstream

On 12th January the subgroup also agreed proposals for an exercise on security procurement, including to support the implementation of the recommendations in the Security by Design report (see above). The exercise will also address the potential for savings in procuring security consultancy and advice, where the fragmentation and overheads of current routines are said to increase cost and restrict supply without necessarily improving quality.

4) Implementing the e-Crime Reduction Agenda

Securing top level support and demonstrating progress: beginning with skills

The report of the meeting on 30th November is on the website and we are now organising meetings to follow up on the areas where we have the potential to add value in the short term, in parallel with the overall scoping exercise.

The first such meeting is on 26th January when e-Skills-UK will host a small meeting to brief those interested in helping to create the security section of the National Skills Academy for IT - www.e-skills.com/e-skills-UK-in-work/2468. That will entail assembling a portfolio of qualifications, courses and materials to meet known employer needs in time for the launch in Quarter 3. e-Security skills include all that might reasonably fit the remit of the Academy: e.g. investigation and forensics as well as security by design, awareness, end-user skills, support and consultancy at all levels.

At this stage we are seeking to identify a leadership cadre of employers (law enforcement, security agencies and consultancies, financial services, telcos, ISPs etc.) and suppliers (relevant accreditations, qualifications, courses, materials etc.) and agree broad terms of reference and an initial action plan. Once that is under way we plan to open the programme to those wishing to volunteer courses and qualifications or information on their skills needs as employers or on the skills needs of their clients (in the case of recruitment agencies and HR consultancies). Please e-mail eurim@eurim.org if you would like to join the leadership team or the employer panel or have relevant courses and materials.

Meetings are also being organised to agree leadership teams and objectives for subgroups to bring together those working on:

- The needs of small firms: David Stockdale of the BCRC has volunteered to lead.
- Awareness programmes: management and corporate as well as consumer: the first meeting will be led by Tony Neate (Get Safe Online), David King (Information Security Awareness Forum) and Martin Smith (SASIG).
- First point of contact exercises: whether for reporting abuse, piracy, bullying or crime. Roland Perry (e-Victims and formerly Secretary of the Internet Crime Forum has volunteered to lead).

Please e-mail eurim@eurim.org to be put in touch with the organisers.

Meetings will also be organised to bring together those interested in co-operation on forensics (skills will be covered in the e-Skills meeting), intelligence sharing (seeking a suitably neutral venue) and child protection (expected to begin with a briefing from CEOP for potential industry partners).

5) Rebuilding and Sustaining the UK High-Tech Skills Base

From 50% of teenagers to University to Graduate level Lifelong Learning available to ALL

The current funding crises in Further and Higher Education, with budget cuts despite rising applications for vocational courses from all ages and at all levels, from first entry or career change to post-graduate updating, raise the need for innovative thinking. There are a growing number of global lifelong learning networks but UK players with world-class skills in this space appear more interested in co-operating with partners in China or the US than with those in other parts of the UK, let alone next door. Meanwhile participation in such networks underpins the multi-billion pound educational “export” earnings of Australia, Canada and New Zealand. The success of the University of Phoenix (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_Phoenix) said by its founder, John Sperling, to have been impossible but for his DPhil in Economic History from Cambridge, demonstrates how innovation and new technology can be combined with rigorous academic standards to create a multi-billion dollar operation on positive private sector cash flow. The Federal funding came later.

We have had a number of interesting discussions recently but there is still little evidence of significant support from Corporate and Associate members for an exercise to look at policies to foster the use of lifelong learning networks to help rebuild the UK skills base without calling for more public funding. Instead many ICT employers are moving up the value chain in their use of imported staff for those tasks not being outsourced overseas. Please e-mail eurim@eurim.org if you would like to support, or help organise and drive, work in this space.

6) Communications

Bringing “real” broadband to the UK and EU

Last week the Prime Minister wrote a surprisingly robust article on the need to deliver high speed broadband across the UK. The next Communications Group meeting, on the morning of 18th January, will begin with comments on the EU timetable and agenda for 2010.

The main item for discussion will, however, be plans for the production of guidance material for parliamentary candidates planning to support campaigns for local Next Generation Networks. This exercise is intended to be joint with the Public Service Delivery Group (see above) and others, including ApComms and the All Party Group on Rural Services. Several candidates have volunteered to review the material with a view to helping meet their own campaigning needs. We also expect to agree that the programme should include a meeting on relationships between local and national network plans, including PSN. Please email eurim@eurim.org for an invitation to join this exercise.

The last item on the agenda is to look as possible joint exercises with the Knowledge Economy and E-Crime Groups and others (such as the e-Business Regulatory Alliance) on EU Patent Law Reform and on IPR enforcement, including the practical side of collating reports and intelligence and organising action against commercial pirates. If this exercise has the necessary support the first deliverable is likely to be a briefing for candidates in the context of the proposals in the Digital Britain Bill (as referred to above). Please e-mail eurim@eurim.org if you are interested, whether or not you can join the meeting on the 18th January.

The London consultation meeting (<http://www.ofcom.org.uk/consult/condocs/draftannplan1011/>) on the Ofcom Annual Plan is on the afternoon of the 18th January.