

To EURIM Members and Observers
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THE EUROPEAN
INFORMATION
SOCIETY GROUP

EURIM



EURIM Newsletter May 2007

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1) Focussing on Members' Priorities: AGM Discussion

Checking forward plans against members' priorities

Feedback to the "Think Note" circulated to members in advance of the AGM confirmed the basic analysis. Discussion at the AGM also showed strong support for improving parliamentary engagement by helping co-ordinate the work of the various groups looking at ICT related issues but was not in favour of premature rebranding. Notes on the feedback and discussion at the AGM are in the members' area of the website and should be read in conjunction with the Industry and Parliament Trust note on their meeting in March. They are at: <http://www.eurim.org.uk/members>

Two further requirements emerged in the course of discussions on the day of the AGM

- "concept viability" reviews: akin to the Intellect service but much earlier in policy formation;
- an exercise on consultation and scrutiny processes, including how to address the problems arising from civil service staff turnover between policy formation, legislation and implementation.

Delivering more for less by forward co-operation, building on the best

The secretariat was tasked to produce a Three Year Plan for the July Council, building on EURIM's strengths and facilitating co-operation with others, based on members' priorities and agreed divisions of labour, to meet common objectives. The first area identified for co-operation relates to Communications and Internet governance and regulation. The All-Party Internet Group has agreed to lead another "Parliament and Internet Conference", probably on 18th October, with EURIM expected to organise the session on confidence/security/policing. We also hope to see a converged programme leading to the Internet Governance Forum at Rio and beyond.

Changes to the team

Philip Dunne MP, Sue Daley (Symantec), Mike Rodd (British Computer Society) and Terence Sandiford (Experian) have joined the EURIM Council in place of Giles Chichester MEP, Adele Louise Carter (BCS), Malcolm Taylor (NTL/Telewest), Sarah Terry (Nortel, now LibDem candidate for Hereford) and John Walker (Experian). Spare places have been held open to enable Council to co-opt new members at its next meeting. (The full list of current Directors and Council Members is at: http://www.eurim.org.uk/what_is_eurim/directors.php)

Listening to the user voice

The annual post AGM reception with the Computer Weekly 500 Club is when the user voice comes to Westminster: this year we were joined by over thirty Chief Information Officers from the Times Top 500, Central and Local Government and equivalent sized unquoted organisations, including charities and voluntary organisations. One of our observers, responsible for an area of policy which receives many inputs from suppliers but few from users, described it as the most useful networking event they had attended this year. EURIM did indeed live up to its objective of bringing politicians, officials and industry, users as well as suppliers, together to discuss difficult issues, constructively.

2) Transforming the management of identity

The evolving, incremental National Identity system

The better management of identity is seen as central to improving the quality of public services, as well as to reducing fraud. On 9th May we had a full house for a presentation on current plans for co-operation between the Home Office, DWP and HMRC in the roll-out of a national shared service on secure identity management. This will link closely, via the DWP Customer Information System, to the “tell us once” agenda, although the latter will not need the same standards of information assurance.

Current plans are focussed on incremental delivery, building on existing operational experience and beginning with passports issued on the basis of an application process that verifies the information provided by individuals before it is stored on the National Identity Register. This will include checks on the uniqueness of that data against the application form, the Customer Information System developed by the DWP in collaboration with HMRC, and other public and private sector databases. Developing a reliable, common means of verifying identities will form the basis for exploring the potential for making best use of identity data, and for ensuring that benefits are realised across the public and private sectors. The meeting was under the Chatham House Rule but an agreed summary report will be placed in the members’ areas of the EURIM website.

Interviewing first-time adult passport applicants is expected to begin this month in a pilot in Belfast, with biometrics for visa applications and procurement to be introduced in June. Progress will continue with a network of offices for first-time passport applicants open in late 2007, with new operational contact centres, and biometrics recorded for most visa applicants. An NIS commissioner is expected to be appointed in 2008, possibly before the NIS goes live. Enrolment for fingerprints for passports will begin by the end of 2009. It should be noted, however, that Treasury ministers subsequently confirmed this week that a substantive budget for an ID card scheme has yet to be approved.

Examples of current private sector good practice

MOSAIC, one of the world’s largest services for collating geo-demographic information to aid policy formation and service targeting, is commonly cited as an example of the benefits to be gained from sharing information. But it is also one of the world’s most tightly regulated and segmented operations, to prevent the risk of personal identification and abuse. On 24th May, Marc Rowley will talk to the Personal Identity Group about the routines used to enable citizens to be viewed in the same way by all public bodies, supporting joined-up government and partnership working, while preserving their privacy and providing similar services to the private sector. The meeting will be held under the Chatham House Rule to enable candid questioning, and is likely to be of particular interest to those grappling with such issues at the policy level. Please contact eurim@eurim.org if you plan to attend.

Progressing the distillation of experience: separating fine cognac from wood alcohol

The sub-group on best practice in the sharing of information now plans to produce a short progress note, including headline recommendations, in early June. The main conclusion to date is that much effort has gone into producing guidance on the secure sharing of information but it is unclear how many of the routines are operational. It is also unclear how many cover genuinely different situations and how many are different approaches to the same situation. What is clear is that those wishing to develop guidance have many models to choose from. There is no need to start from scratch.

3) Evidence-based versus democratised policy formation and service delivery?

Progress with the Transformational Government Dialogue programme

MPs from all parties have shown great interest in the plans for Transformational Government Dialogues on “Social Inclusion”, “Mixed Economy Delivery Models” and “Democratising the Delivery of Public Services”. So too have some very senior potential contributors. The dialogues are likely to be invaluable in providing a platform for demonstrating how different groups have addressed some very difficult issues. The planning team does, however, still have the task of organising a programme that we can deliver with the resources available.

We are currently reviewing the timetable with the likelihood of calls for evidence going out late summer, and the dialogues taking place in the Autumn in order to maximise influence on the new PM, CSR and the Transformational Government Report 1.1, due out during January 2008.

Parliamentary members interested in participating, whatever your party, are asked to e-mail Margaret Moran MP moranm@parliament.uk for an invitation to participate, mentioning the topic(s) of most interest to you: so too are Corporate and Associate members willing to join the organisation team.

4) Confidence or Confusion over Internet Safety and Security

“Crime as usual” (but on-line) or “A crisis of confidence”(in the on-line world)

The percentage of on-line transactions that are fraudulent are said (US data) to be falling year on year as volumes grow and security improves. Reported losses in the UK appear akin to those in the physical world and less than 10% of spend on electronic security. However, according to evidence given to the House of Lords enquiry on Personal Internet Safety by one of the world’s main e-commerce players, 17% of Internet users have stopped logging on because of bad experiences. The oral evidence to the enquiry is at www.parliament.uk/parliamentary_committees/lords_select/Evidence1.cfm and you can hear the latest session at www.parliamentlive.tv/Player/index.aspx?Encoding=6688. The main change since the EURIM-ipp study: www.eurim.org.uk/activities/ecrime/outputs.php is a growing willingness on the part of major players to consider collective action to reduce or remove systematic vulnerabilities and pursue common predators, not just to urge customers to spend more, time as well as money, on security. Those looking to what can be done to reduce vulnerability in the future should also visit www.ktn.qinetiq-tim.net/site/guest/annualconference.html for details of the conference of the Office of Science and Technology Cybersecurity Knowledge Transfer Network on 12th June.

We expect to be able to confirm EURIM’s forward plans in this area by the end of June. These are likely to include organising the session on confidence and policing at the next Parliament and Internet Conference, this time in the context of follow up on the discussions in Washington in February, the recommendations from the House of Lords enquiry and preparations for the Internet Governance Forum in Rio de Janeiro in November. The overall aim is no longer just to secure an effective UK national strategy but to ensure that London (as proxy for UK plc) is a global hub for thought leadership and action on Internet safety, as it is for financial services, insurance and international trade in general. That is, however, a highly ambitious objective and we need to be clear as to those actions to be routed through EURIM and those where our role is to help manoeuvre others into action.

5) The Road to Rio: and the Internet Governance Forum

A Bretton Woods Moment for the Internet?

Until recently the Internet was dominated, both technically and commercially by the United States. That is ceasing to be the case. The Chinese and Japanese have driven progress on IPV6 and the next generation of routers and switches. The social networks and search engines of Asia now carry at least as much traffic as those of North America or Europe. London has unique potential for acting as a bridge between the cultures – as it already does for financial services, insurance, freight forwarding and other international industries subject to semi-incompatible regulation and legislation around the world. Structuring political debate in Westminster on how that potential can be fulfilled is expected to be another prime topic for discussion on 18th October at the joint Parliament and Internet conference.

6) Update on current consultations and recent reports

Details of current consultations and reports are e-mailed direct to members and observers using the lists of interests registered on the membership database. They are also placed on the website at http://www.eurim.org.uk/whats_new/index.php

Those since the last newsletter include:

- A questionnaire to aid the independent Information Assurance review commissioned by the Cabinet Office for input to the Transformational Government programme: responses were due to Nick Coleman nick.coleman@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk by 16th May
- Home Office consultation on the UK Implementation of the EU Directive on the retention of communications data: responses to commsdata@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk by 11th June. Note also a joint consultation meeting with the e-Business Regulatory Alliance, 21st May, 10.30 - 12.30 in Committee Room 4, House of Lords
- House of Lords Select Committee Inquiry into the Impact of Surveillance and Data Collection upon the Privacy of Citizens and their Relationship with the State: submissions by Friday 8th June to constitution@parliament.uk
- Request for inputs to a POST note on radio spectrum management: from Mary Matthews, Physical Sciences Advisor, (IT and Communications), at matthewsm@parliament.uk
- The latest version of the TVWF Directive for discussion by the Ministerial Culture Council meeting on 24th May. The second reading in the European Parliament is currently scheduled for 18th June. E-mail eurim@eurim.org for a copy of the draft that, subject to those discussions, may become the final version of the Directive.
- The consultation paper www.dca.gov.uk/consult/damages/cp0907.pdf on the law on Damages includes a possible change in the damages available under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act. Responses are due by 27th July