

To EURIM Members and Observers
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THE EUROPEAN
INFORMATION
SOCIETY GROUP

EURIM



EURIM Newsletter July 2007

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1) The Road to Rio - Internet Governance and Policing

Using anglo-US co-operation to ensure practical co-operation

MPs from PITCOM and EURIM discussed co-operation with the US Internet Caucus in February - www.eurim.org.uk/members/USvisit_report_Jun07revisions.pdf - and agreed the importance of ensuring that the meeting in Rio builds on the positive resolution of the World Summit on the Information Society in Tunis. Nominet has since launched a “Best Practice Challenge 2007” - www.nominet.org.uk/news/latest/?contentId=4036 - to “recognise and celebrate” those who have not only embraced the challenge of ensuring “that the Internet offers a secure, open, accessible and diverse experience for all” but have helped overcome them. It is expected that the winners will be announced in October, perhaps at the planned Parliament and Industry conference on the 18th, in time for them to be used as exemplars in Rio.

Plans are under way for long-term co-operation with the Internet Caucus and its advisory committee on cross-boundary issues. The short-term objectives include:

- Securing UK - US co-operation in using the IGF in Rio as the focus for positive discussion on practical issues such as aid to developing nations and child protection.
- Organising a programme of activity for the next visit of the Internet Caucus to London (expected 28-30th November) which will demonstrate the value of ongoing co-operation to both sides.

Meanwhile EURIM organised lunch and a tour of Parliament for the staffers to the Internet Caucus on 29th May during their visit to the UK. The visit included meetings with the Oxford Internet Institute and Nominet and we are discussing co-operation with them and others regarding events during the main Caucus visit. Please e-mail me if you would like to help with organisation and support.

Using child protection as the cutting edge for political co-operation

After discussions with the Children’s Charities Coalition for the Internet Safety (CHIS), the Internet Watch Foundation and others, we agreed that the overall objective of the EURIM Child Protection sub-group should be to help provide a political front end for the work that is already happening, beginning with a briefing for Parliamentarians (updating that produced by Kay Withers two years ago) to be available in good time for the Parliament and Internet Conference on 18th October and for the IGF in Rio. The briefing should explain how the UK efforts fit together and the main players involved. This approach appears to have widespread support from those seeking to avoid duplication of effort and to focus support on those who have demonstrated that they can produce results or are trying to tackle current, as opposed to past, problems. If you are trying to make sense of who is doing what in this space and would like to compare notes with your peers, please contact Dan Mount - mountd@parliament.uk - for an invitation to the workshop to assemble the briefing material.

2) Launching the Transformational Government Dialogues

Advance notice of call for evidence

On the 27th June Margaret Moran referred to the objectives of the Dialogues in an adjournment debate on Transformational Government. Pat McFadden responded as Cabinet Office Minister, with examples, like the bereavement centre in his own constituency, that demonstrate what can and should be done on a much wider scale.

www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200607/cmhansrd/cm070627/halltext/70627h0009.htm#07062779000538.

We have since arranged a meeting with the new Cabinet Office team to discuss co-operation and on July 18th we will call for evidence on the three main topics:

- the means of delivering genuinely socially inclusive services, given that parts of society are best reached by very different channels and that those in most need of support are least likely to be reached via a screen and keyboard;
- the challenges of organising partnership delivery across the barriers between the public, private and voluntary/community sectors, including the means of ensuring that dominant players share cost and risk, as opposed to mandating others to follow their lowest “silo cost” pattern of working;
- the democratisation of delivery, including consultation methods that reach those most affected, (the recipients and those who inter-act directly with them), performance monitoring based on their experience of what is actually delivered and evolving priorities for improvement and devolved authority for front-line improvement within overall policy parameters and funding .

Those making submissions will also be asked to cover the expected roles of central and local government, the measurement and management of performance and the political and cultural issues of bringing about the changes in governance and accountability that are also expected. Those who have so far agreed to participate in hearings in the Autumn, after the announcement of the Comprehensive Spending review, include Sir David Varney, John Suffolk and Matthew Taylor (now at the RSA). We also expect to cover the experience of the Citizens Advice Bureaux and of local authorities from Sunderland to Milton Keynes.

3) Setting Standards for Identity Management and for Information Sharing

Round Table on Identity Management Standards

The EURIM Personal Identity Group is hosting a planning workshop on 20th July with the head of standards for the Identity and Passport Service. The aim is to establish an independent Identity Management standards group. The focus will be on how to promote shared understanding of identity assurance requirements, to help maximise interoperability between systems, maintain integrity of identity data, improve efficiency and foster trust. The standards adopted will need to be fit for purpose and adapted to business risk. The governance of the overall Identity Management Strategy Group is expected to involve senior officials from across government, chaired by a permanent secretary (or equivalent) and to have links to the appropriate standards groups.

Invitations for the workshop have been sent to key government departments/agencies, local government, the devolved administrations and industry, particularly those with experience of developing and operating relevant standards. The first objective is to identify who is willing to work with whom to achieve a repository of relevant standards, building on what already exists, before the end of 2007. Much will depend on the quality of input and the commitment of all concerned and the workshop will be focussed on process rather than content. It is now full with a waiting list. Others wishing to be involved in the follow up should e-mail eurim@eurim.org and include a short note on their reasons for interest and potential contribution as well as organisation and contact details.

Collating practical experience with Data Sharing protocols

Members of the sub-group are currently drafting a short paper for circulation before the summer recess covering lessons learned and discriminating between the organisational, cultural and legal barriers to the wider adoption of what appears to be good practice. While there is agreement “at the highest level” on the need for streamlining in data sharing protocols, cross-agency sharing at the operational level is

often prevented or inhibited due to departments invoking powers under different (and sometimes incompatible) legislation and procedures (e.g. demands from departments with hierarchical processes to organisations whose routines are based on transfer between named and trusted professionals).

4) The Power of Information

www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/publications/reports/power_information/power_information.pdf

The review of public information sources commissioned by Cabinet Office Minister Hilary Armstrong from Tom Steinberg and Ed Mayo found that "by supporting the existing innovation of citizens, with facilitation and greater access to information, government will be creating opportunities to empower individuals and communities to create solutions to improve their lives and make informed decisions". The review claims that Government could often achieve its own aims of working with service users more cheaply by working with pre-existing sites e.g. Tripadvisor, Rightsnet and Netmums.

The authors report: "We are now at the start of a new era, where Government starts to learn how to support citizens' own ways of making, finding and re-using information online". As part of a new strategy and vision for engaging with citizens and re-users of its information, the review recommends that the Government should pilot 'Power of Information' partnerships between major departments and user-generated websites to explore the potential benefits for citizens.

Of the 15 recommendations made, Recommendation 2 states that in order to reduce unnecessary duplication of pre-existing user-generated sites, the Central Office of Information should update the guidelines for minimum website standards by December 2007, and that departments should be strongly advised to consult the operators and users of pre-existing user-generated sites before they build their own versions.

5) Preserving and promoting confidence on-line

Confidence in the Internet as a safe route for dealing with Government, as well to learn, play or shop, is critical to the Transformational Government Agenda. "A National Information Assurance Strategy for the UK" www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/csia/documents/ia_strategy/ia_strategy.pdf was launched on 27th June. The "vision" is "A UK environment where citizens, business and government use and enjoy the full benefits of information systems with confidence". The strategy will be owned by "The Officials Committee on Security" (department and agency Chief Information Security Officers), the "Information Assurance Policy and Programme Board" and the CIO Council. It will be driven forward by CSIA, CESA and CPNI. Collaboration with industry will be via groups such as the Crypto Developments Forum and the Information Assurance Collaboration Group. The challenge they face is well summarised in the synopsis of the Independent Review of Government Information Assurance by Nick Coleman. www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/csia/documents/ia_strategy/ia_review.pdf

Meanwhile on the 20th June, over a hundreds head of electronic security filled the main conference room at New Scotland Yard for a briefing on the plans of ACPO and the Metropolitan police for a national co-ordinating operation for reporting, intelligence and investigation, including for the UK end of international co-operation. The audience represented the UK's largest players in the knowledge-based industries such Aerospace and Pharmaceuticals as well as Financial Services and Content. There is clearly *very* strong industry support for the proposed operation, albeit combined with a concern that core police functions not be sub-contracted to the private sector: no-one wanted the report of their fraud or IPR theft handled by a secondee from a rival. However, it was also clear that, given the right lead from Government, there was likely to be a massive contribution of resource to help with crime prevention, technical support and international co-operation.

Addressing the overall governance issues

21st century society is critically dependent on the secure and reliable functioning of its ICT infrastructure. That infrastructure is vulnerable and under threat, including from a crisis of public confidence. It is unclear who is, or should be, responsible for action: locally, nationally or globally.

There appear to be three interlinked sets of issues:

- Internet Governance: where we need ways of securing co-operation on global problems without getting bogged down in disputes between economic or military super-powers.
- The interplay between confidence, security and policing and between government, law enforcement agencies, business and citizens: where long-standing debates over priorities, power and partnership have acquired on-line dimensions.
- The role of Parliaments and Civic Society in ensuring effective debate and accountability regarding regulatory frameworks for converged and integrated services that increasingly determine the livelihood and lifestyle choices available to citizens as well as to business.

In each case it is unclear where or how the issues are to be debated. The discussions that do take place are relatively low level and fragmented: commonly within professional, legal or business interest groups looking at part of the problem from “their” perspective. The need is to create effective frameworks for debate at both national and international level. The UN “Internet Governance Forum” provides a conceptual framework but needs to be made to work. That requires action at national, as well as international or regional level.

The prime objective of the EURIM E-Crime Group over the year ahead will be to support and promote the creation of a UK Internet Governance Forum that will demonstrate thought leadership to the rest of the world and secure a UK role in the on-line world akin to that of London in international financial and physical transactions. The first deliverable will be a session on Internet Governance and Policing at the planned Parliament and Internet Conference on the 18th October. This will be organised in co-operation with Nominet, CHIS, ACPO and others. Advance materials will be produced to aid discussion. The work for that session is expected to lead to a follow up programme to help progress consultation and debate during the run-up to the IGF at Rio. The group also plans to support joint activity and events with others, including the planned PITCOM meeting on the report of House of Lords enquiry into Personal Internet Safety (30th October) and a planned joint meeting (led by All-Party Police Group) on the co-ordination of on-line policing in the UK (date to be agreed).

6) Monitoring the Information Society

Mapping the Initiatives and Players

We are in discussion with the E-Business Regulatory Alliance, BCS, IET and others, including officials in the new Department of Business Enterprise and Regulatory Reform, on the creation of a joint service to help our respective members monitor regulatory proposals and make their views heard during consultations on proposals affecting the way they do business. This will need to be resourced and funded so please e-mail your views, including any offers of support to me c/o eurim@eurim.org.

7) Making Your Voice Heard: Forthcoming Consultation opportunities and events.

The Labour Party e-Futures Group will be seeking policy inputs from the IS and ICT communities during a series of consultation meetings in October-November. Please e-mail moranm@parliament.uk for an invitation to participate. The Conservative Technology forum, chaired by Malcolm Harbour MEP is seeking similar inputs: e-mail mharbour@europarl.eu.int for an invitation.

The Home Affairs Select Committee enquiry into the Surveillance Society has received almost no submissions from the ICT industry regarding the value of the products and services it is promoting to government. Margaret Moran would like to hear urgently from those wishing to redress the balance.

The seminar on Spectrum Management being organised by POST and Ofcom for the morning of 16th July is expected to be of particular importance, given that so many industry players agree there are important and urgent issues to be addressed at the political, not just regulatory, level.