

To EURIM Members and Observers  
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THE EUROPEAN  
INFORMATION  
SOCIETY GROUP

EURIM



## EURIM Newsletter December 2007

### 1 The Transformational Government Dialogues

#### *A very successful start*

The first session (6<sup>th</sup> November) began with eight “seekers after truth” (Margaret Moran’s words) hearing Sir David Varney trace the silo structures of Government back to 1918. Other witnesses illustrated the suffering, even death, that results. One of the six MPs on the panel was subsequently quoted in the press as saying that “the interplay between policy maker and end user” was “the most informative two hours he had spent in Westminster for several years”.

Among the key messages to emerge were:

- A mix of fear and internal targets causes public servants to avoid providing help outside their agency’s area.
- The socially excluded suffer most from the silo nature of government and also have to pay more for private sector goods and services.
- Getting it right first time improves service AND saves money and is best done (cost and quality) by a mix of on-line, call-centre and face-to-face.

In the second session (on 22<sup>nd</sup> November) a slightly different panel of eight heard some of the pre-conditions for success in organising delivery partnerships. The witnesses included Sunderland Council (Winners of the Digital Challenge), NCVO, the Social Enterprise Coalition and the National Union of Sub-Postmasters.

The key messages included:

- Most failures are doomed before commissioning begins. Success comes from involving recipients and prospective partners in the pre-commissioning planning.
- Current accountability regimes (e.g. the same reporting requirements for a £20,000 project as for a £2 million programme) militate against small, local, low risk projects.
- Commissioners of services from any sector need to remember that “people often have the temerity to live their lives outside political boundaries!”

A common message from both sessions was that whatever the system or approach, it is the individual willing to go an extra mile that makes the difference.

The reports and soundtracks are available at <http://www.eurim.org.uk/activities/tgdialogues.php>

The third session, on 6<sup>th</sup> December, on “Democratising Delivery” will hear from those running and using “Patient Opinion”, “Love Lewisham,” and “Tidy Oldham”, as well as from John Suffolk, the Government’s Chief Information Officer. We will hopefully have the report in draft before the meeting on “Government 2.0 or Truly Transformative Government“ that is being organised by POST and the Oxford Internet Institute in the Attlee Suite on the afternoon of 22<sup>nd</sup> January. <http://www.oii.ox.ac.uk/events/details.cfm?id=169>

Those interested in the impact of social networking on politics are also recommended to read the PITCOM briefing “Virtual Worlds, Real Issues”:  
[http://www.pitcom.org.uk/downloads/index.php?pitcom\\_October\\_2007\\_briefing.pdf](http://www.pitcom.org.uk/downloads/index.php?pitcom_October_2007_briefing.pdf)

## 2 Secure Information Sharing:

### *Data leaks necessitate action to avoid backlash*

The recent massive publicity for the consequences of “insecure data sharing” makes the report of the EURIM group on practical experience with Information Sharing Protocols timely as well as important. There is a very real risk of a backlash against sharing as opposed to ensuring adequate practice at operational level. The draft will be circulated for peer review this week and is available to members on the website at [http://www.eurim.org.uk/members/pi/DSSG\\_ISP.doc](http://www.eurim.org.uk/members/pi/DSSG_ISP.doc)

The Government “Information Assurance Governance Framework”, published in November 2005 (see [http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/upload/assets/www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/csia/ia\\_governance\\_framework.pdf](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/upload/assets/www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/csia/ia_governance_framework.pdf) ) followed a letter from Sir Andrew Turnbull on January 2004 advising Permanent Secretaries to “nominate a Board Member to take ownership of information risk”. The more detailed supporting material for Board Members subsequently produced via the Information Assurance Advisory Council can be found online at: <http://www.iaac.org.uk/Default.aspx?tabid=62> .

The security world has since been transformed with the low cost, mass-market encryption technologies for secure storage and communications to counter the equally rapid emergence of on-line and insider threats. Several EURIM members (both corporate and associate) were represented at a meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> November which agreed the production of a new generation of guidance material for “External Directors”, so that they can at least ask the right questions to hold their executive colleagues to account.

On 9<sup>th</sup> November a small team from among the corporate members represented on the Personal Identity and Data Sharing group reviewed the status of personal identity and data sharing across the UK public sector to identify issues where they felt EURIM was uniquely positioned to assist.

Their conclusions can be summarised as “the production of political briefing material to:

- 1 Summarise the evidence on either side of the “debate” between centrally organised and regulated information assurance and that which is citizen-centric and/or “federated”.
- 2 Inform debate on possible ways of reversing the downward spiral of mutual mistrust between government and its citizens over verifying, validating and accessing personal data.
- 3 Ensure industry-strength “systems thinking”, beginning with human and organisational behaviour, the simplification of government/citizen inter-actions and embedded security, before ministers commit, let alone before programmes are actually commissioned.
- 4 Suggest how personal identification and data sharing rules might be separately defined (and by whom) for each Varney citizen-group – as opposed to having blanket definitions.
- 5 Enable balanced debate on risk by also identifying the costs (human as well as financial) of not sharing and situations where sharing can greatly improve security as well as accuracy.
6. Examine the case for rationalising the regulation of privacy and surveillance around an Information Commissioner with powers and resources akin to those of the Health and Safety Executive.
8. Support the cross-government Identity Management Standards Policy Group (IMSPG) in the identification and development of relevant standards.”

The group now wishes to identify the right volunteers to help prioritise and refine such ideas into costed and funded partnership plans and drive them through from conception to action. Please respond to [davywright2@ntlworld.com](mailto:davywright2@ntlworld.com) indicating what and how you would like to contribute. The selection of topics will be based on the support on offer, political as well as funding, expertise, people etc.

On the evening of 10<sup>th</sup> December we have a joint meeting with the All-Party ID Theft Group for MPs, and Peers organised by CSC to help answer the question "what evidence exists from countries with identity cards of the real benefits and drawbacks of the cards and of the identity management systems that support them?"

### 3) Internet Governance

*The Road from Rio: to London via Delhi?*

The IGF at Rio turned out well, despite the weather (it rained almost non-stop), largely because the call by one of the opening speakers to use the event to address bureaucratic structures was ignored by most of the delegates. As one seasoned observer of such events said at one of the subsequent wash-up events: "They voted with their feet."

It was indeed clear that almost all present wanted to discuss practical co-operation, not "committology". Many of the previous "political" conflicts were defused by the fact that 80% of the board of ICANN, including the chair, are now from outside the United States and its next meeting is in Delhi, as is the next IGF. It also helps that China wishes to see the rapid agreement and adoption of global standards for secure virtual and visual networking based on IPV6. Such standards are similarly integral to the products and services planned by many of the main US players and include an approximation to the "authorization" layer that is missing from the current Internet: thus meeting one of the trickiest recommendations of the recent House of Lords report on Personal Internet Safety. Those who might delay co-operation in expediting such progress by erecting political or legal barriers (as with the last IETF attempt to address these issues) are now likely to be bulldozed out of the way.

There are, however, serious issues of governance to be addressed, including that of confidence in the Internet as a safe place for billions of consumers and their children. There was therefore much interest in what came to be called "The London Action Pan" - to pilot the co-operative approach. This will be a major exercise but we are in a good position to at least help bring some of the players together. Half the EURIM Board were in Rio and/or involved with the pre-Rio consultations on the UK position and post-Rio discussions (including with members of the US Internet Caucus and MEPs) on assembling the necessary consortia (intra-UK, pan-EU, tripartite, International). Please e-mail me if you would like to contribute to this exercise, whether via EURIM or one of the other "midwives".

### 4) E-Crime

*An industry-led call for action based on co-operation*

Over the past couple of weeks there have been several high level meetings of information security professionals to discuss how to limit the expected "collateral damage" as tech-savvy criminals exploit the opportunities afforded to them by publicity for recent data leaks, whether or not they have actually acquired copies of the files. It became immediately clear that co-operation was hampered by lack of a properly resourced and funded "NHTCU replacement". Many felt that expediting the known plans of the Metropolitan Police and ACPO for a National Co-ordinating Unit were an obvious immediate step on the way to something more ambitious. Hence the petition on the Number 10 website <http://petitions.pm.gov.uk/ecrime/> calling on the Prime Minister to "give the formation of a police central e-crime unit, as proposed by the Metropolitan and ACPO urgent priority"

The supporting statement to the petition is: "*The consequences of, and reactions to, the loss of records by HM Revenue and Customs, make the creation of a well resourced operation to address computer assisted crime (including information and identity theft from data and call centres, not just the use of the Internet to automate old crimes and invent new ones) a matter of great urgency.*"

*The operation should cover all the activities proposed by the Metropolitan Police to the Home Office for such a Unit (beginning with the collation of incident notification and intelligence and support for and co-operation with organisations like Get Safe On-Line and the National E-Crime Prevention Centre) but it needs to be on a scale akin to similar operations in the United States, with additional funding and resources from other government departments and industry (i.e. not just existing Police budgets) as necessary."*

Such petitions are restricted to UK residents eligible to vote but, according to press cover, the organiser plans to contact the main ICT professional bodies and trade association for support.

## **5) Standards for Identity Management:**

*Mapping reality and building on it...*

As mentioned above, EURIM and the All-Party Identity Theft Group are co-operating on a briefing event for Parliamentary Members on the evening of 10<sup>th</sup> December. On the morning of 13<sup>th</sup> December the main group, including corporate members and observers, has a briefing on the evolution of t-Scheme: “from PKI to Identity Assurance”. We are in discussion with IAAC and others on an exercise to “map” players and initiatives with regard to Information Assurance and have organised joint workshops with Intellect on 12<sup>th</sup> December on “Processes” and “Identity Assurance”.

It would appear obvious to extend this co-operation to the rest of our work on Identity Management. However, for such co-operation to be worthwhile it has to have the whole-hearted support of those with practical experience of running systems that interoperate successfully with others using different legal and organisational structures, let alone hardware and software. I would therefore welcome feedback as to whether our user members and observers are indeed content to work in such close co-operation with their would-be suppliers.

## **6) Reskilling the UK Workforce**

*...and breeding more golden geese*

High ICT level skills and workforce updating appear outside current political priorities. The title of Public Service Agreement 2 [http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/A/5/pbr\\_csr07\\_psa2.pdf](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/A/5/pbr_csr07_psa2.pdf) refers to “ensuring a world class skills base by 2020” but the content is mainly about adult literacy, including ICT user skills. We are in discussion with CPHC and others on an exercise to change this, including a high level event in April but there is an immediate need is to draw attention to the practical effects of the HEFCE (Higher Education Funding Council for England) consultation on the “The Withdrawal of funding for equivalent or lower qualifications [http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2007/07\\_27/](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2007/07_27/) (replies due before the 7th December).

Under the changes proposed, a student with a BSc in Physics could enrol on a conversion MSc and get funded but could not be funded for any part of an undergraduate course that was part of a conversion, re-skilling or updating programme. Students with a postgraduate qualification (say an MBA obtained 15 years ago) could also not be funded for re- and up-skilling into Computing/IT. The reason is that it is not a SIVS (strategically important and vulnerable subject) inside STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics).

This is potentially very serious given that MSc conversion courses are currently one of the main sources of, for example, higher-level information security skills. Already the majority of the students on these are from overseas because the UK is unusual in not allowing spend on re-skilling to be fully tax-deductible by the individual and most employers have “outsourced” career development.

## **7) Follow-up to EURIM Knowledge Economy paper**

The conclusions of the paper were reviewed on 27<sup>th</sup> November with the DIUS Minister for Innovation, Ian Pearson MP. Chris Godwin represented the EURIM Knowledge Economy Group. There appeared to be broad agreement with the EURIM conclusions and the outcome was an invitation to feed suggestions for innovation policy into the Minister's office ahead of a planned formal innovation policy paper being issued for public consultation in March 2008. As the next step for EURIM, Chris suggests reconvening the group that produced the original paper, plus new recruits, to produce recommendations on innovation policy to go into DIUS. Please e-mail [eurim@eurim.org](mailto:eurim@eurim.org) if you would like an invitation to participate.