

To EURIM Members and Observers  
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THE EUROPEAN  
INFORMATION  
SOCIETY GROUP

EURIM



## EURIM Newsletter January 2008

### 1) Transforming Public Services Delivery by Consultation and “Sousveillance”

*“The most informative two hours I have spent in years”*

This was the comment of one former minister after the first “dialogue”. The juxtaposition of theory and reality that he found so refreshing continued in the other two sessions. The potential, problems, pressures and pitfalls that could and should drive improvements in delivery, which politicians of all parties agree are needed, come out well in the session recordings and summary reports that are now on the EURIM website <http://www.eurim.org.uk/activities/tgdialogues.php#meetings>. One result has been a flurry of late submissions. These are being added to the file of those received earlier which is available at <http://www.eurim.org.uk/activities/tgdialogues/outputs.php#links>. A particular gem was the description of “sousveillance” - customers and citizens covertly recording or filming their experience and posting the results on YouTube, Facebook et al - as a major threat to those who did not respond by making it even easier to text or e-mail such material direct to those responsible for action.

The industry participants in the programme are producing a summary of key points for the Parliamentary participants to review before the first report is drafted. The group will also have a separate “hearing” with John Suffolk. I am under firm instructions not to “leak” the conclusions but some will be obvious from reading the submissions. For example there is a fundamental systemic weakness in the way in which policy is formulated and contracted within departmental silos and performance is subsequently monitored against silo targets, with “joining up” as an add-on at the behest of Cabinet Office, rather than seen to be at the core of the process. Overcoming this weakness will require sustained effort and all-party co-operation, including the joining up of Parliamentary scrutiny - as has already been recommended by the Treasury Select Committee.

This problem appears to be currently outside the terms of reference for the otherwise most welcome review of the “public services industry” which John Hutton has asked Dr DeAnne Julius to conduct: <http://www.gnn.gov.uk/environment/fullDetail.asp?ReleaseID=335917&NewsAreaID=2&NavigatedFromDepartment=True>. The willingness and ability of the private and voluntary sectors to work across silo boundaries will be one of the prime determinants of successful delivery but perhaps it is a problem too far and would delay what is a most timely exercise.

### 2) Secure Information Sharing and Identity Management

*“Personal access control at field level, full encryption and acceptance of liability for error”*

There was a sharp intake of breath among MPs at the back when some of the features of the Belgian ID registration systems were described at the joint EURIM briefing with the All Party Group on Identity Fraud on 10<sup>th</sup> December organized by CSC. Another MP, next to whom I was standing during the presentation, muttered that it was “the first grown-up discussion” he had heard on the subject. However, other meetings in the month showed how much remains to be done. Many suppliers still believe that if they wait long enough there will be another round of big-bang procurements to detailed consultant-drafted specifications. The world has changed with recent revelations as to the scale of data vulnerability and compromise inherent in centralised systems that allow large numbers of public servants to have access to full records. But the “secure” sharing of that which is necessary to deliver joined up service is long overdue.

On 18<sup>th</sup> January the Personal Identity and Information Sharing group will meet to discuss a programme to try to get the political support necessary to move debate away from the expensive re-invention of technology enabled square wheels. The aim will be to focus instead on building on a thousand years of private sector experience in organising transactions between those who have never met and over a century of experience in harnessing new technologies, from Cable to Internet, to support the necessary people processes.

### 3) Communications Convergence and Regulation

*Supporting the work of others rather than duplicating their efforts*

There is a strong overlap between the EURIM Council and the Executive of the All-Party Communications Group. Our Corporate and Associate members are active in groups like ISPA, Intellect, ERA and the Broadband Stakeholder Group. We therefore aim to limit our work in this space to helping ensure that issues do not fall down cracks, are picked up by others and that our members are informed and can contribute accordingly.

Just before Christmas the Culture Secretary, James Purnell, and Business Secretary, John Hutton, announced the formation of a joint "Think Tank" to look at the opportunities and challenges posed by the merging of broadcasting and communications services to begin work early in the New Year. The press release and objectives are at:

<http://www.gnn.gov.uk/environment/fullDetail.asp?ReleaseID=340723&NewsAreaID=2&NavigatedFromDepartment=True>

The programme will include a series of seminars to bring together key industry decision makers, with opportunities to submit advance views. The first three will cover:

- Why does convergence matter - 7th February
- Competition and Innovation: content and services - 18th March
- Competition and Innovation: networks - 22nd April

Consultations will also start shortly on the implementation of the Audio-Visual Media Services Directive. One of the key features will be to outlaw "product placement" except when it is explicitly permitted. While this topic is not of "headline" interest to current dominant players in the world of broadcasting, the small print is highly significant - given the rapid changes taking place in business models for funding the production of innovative content in a world of global piracy and Internet advertising.

The meeting convened by Alun Michael in December to confirm support for the formation of a UK Internet Governance Forum had a very positive response from those invited: who represented a cross section of audiences rather than a comprehensive list of those whose support will be needed. There were few apologies for absence and all who said they would attend did so. There is considerable international interest in the idea of "walking the talk" through engaging all parties to work on Internet issues. I agreed to produce a draft set of "maps" of the issues that may need to be addressed and the main players concerned with each area, based on updating and extending the "technical appendices" produced for the Parliament and Internet Conference: [www.eurim.org.uk/activities/ecrime/outputs.php](http://www.eurim.org.uk/activities/ecrime/outputs.php) Please let me know if you are willing to help with inputs or, even better, can let me know who has already done this.

The current aim is to work towards a much larger meeting on 6th March which will provide an opportunity for report-back and discussion of the IGF in Rio in November and to discuss how we develop ways of tackling crime and nuisance via the Internet, launch the second round of the Nominet Best Practice Awards and start early planning for a "Team UK" approach to the next IGF in Delhi at the end of 2008. Please contact Julia Rodriguez, [rodriguezj@parliament.uk](mailto:rodriguezj@parliament.uk) in Alun Michael's office if you would like to help with this very ambitious programme.

#### **4) E-Crime: Moves Towards Rationalisation and Co-operation**

*“Keep calm and don’t panic” may still be correct but effective action is becoming urgent*

Concern over the risk of a collapse of confidence in the on-line world has led the professional bodies concerned with risk management and information security to look afresh at co-operation to “educate” those at the top of large organisations (both public and private sector) and not just end-users.

The EURIM aim is to use their shared political objectives to bring them together and achieve critical mass. Relevant ideas currently under discussion include:

- The plans of the ISSA Awareness Group to produce an “External Directors’ Guide” to Information Risk, based on summarising and updating some of the excellent material in the archive section of the IAAC website <http://www.iaac.org.uk>.
- An IAAC offer to help produce a EURIM style “map” of current Information Assurance initiatives and players to inform political debate in this space.
- A Cybersecurity Knowledge Transfer Network offer to provide the backing necessary to enable an update and expansion of the “map” of e-security courses and qualifications produced by EURIM, including a workshop to bring players together, linked to the plans of BCS, CPHC and Intellect to improve Industry-Academic co-operation.

#### **5) Reskilling the UK Workforce: and Breeding More Golden Geese**

*Ratcheting workforce skills up the list of political priorities*

The support for Early Day Motion 317 and the similar petition on the No 10 Website showed the strength of feeling triggered by the HEFCE consultation on cutting funding for courses for those with past qualifications at the same or higher level who need updating or retraining to remain employable.

The Innovation and Universities Select Committee enquiry offers an opportunity to examine the issues in detail: [www.parliament.uk/parliamentary\\_committees/ius/ius\\_061207.cfm](http://www.parliament.uk/parliamentary_committees/ius/ius_061207.cfm)

There will be a meeting on the morning of 29<sup>th</sup> January to discuss the longer-term EURIM role in this space. The first stage is expected to be a “political engineering” session as part of the conference on improving Industry-Academic co-operation being organised by BCS, CPHC and Intellect on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> April at the University of Greenwich. The objective of the session will be to test whether there is the necessary consensus and support for the campaign that will be needed if we are to secure much greater priority for updating and maintaining the skills of the existing workforce skills at all levels.

Please let me know if you would like to be involved.

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

The successful meeting with the DIUS Minister for Innovation, Ian Pearson, to discuss the EURIM paper's observations, was followed by another with Stephen Timms, Minister for Competitiveness at BERR. Two potential outcomes are:

- DIUS is planning a public consultation on its role and objectives to start in March this year. EURIM has been invited, ahead of that, to submit its own views and proposals. Please let me know if you would like to be involved in a new workstream on this topic.
- At BERR, the Minister is interested potentially in extending the remit of the Information Age Partnership to include informatics-intensive industry beyond the current ICT and media members. This should then address the common issues experienced across innovative UK business, not least services and “servicization”. This could well include how to increase the relevance and timeliness of academia and education to the competitiveness of the UK's often dynamic requirements in the informatics-intensive services sectors.

## **7) Only 8% of HMG Data Systems “not fit for purpose”**

*National Audit Office Fourth Validation Compendium Report*

The NAO report on the success or otherwise of the systems used to measure performance against target in the hundred or so Public Service Agreements in the 2004 Spending Review can be found at: [http://www.nao.org.uk/publications/nao\\_reports/07-08/070822i.pdf](http://www.nao.org.uk/publications/nao_reports/07-08/070822i.pdf)

Half the systems were “fit for purpose” and a third were “broadly appropriate” but needed improvement. Less encouraging was the finding that the Agreements accompanying the 2007 Review “showed some attempt to learn the lessons” but while departments have taken steps to improve the quality of existing monitoring systems they “have been less successful at transferring the learning to the development of new data systems”.