

To EURIM Members and Observers
From Philip Virgo, EURIM Secretary General
E-mail: virgo.philip@eurim.org

THE EUROPEAN
INFORMATION
SOCIETY GROUP

EURIM



EURIM Newsletter May 2008

1) Why Do We Never Learn?

The pre-conditions for public sector systems success

Earlier this year I was asked to update a paper presented five years ago, on why the public sector fails to learn from past successes, let alone mistakes, for publication in the Spring 2008 issue of “Transformation”, the magazine published by Capgemini and the National School of Government. The article has now been published as part of the warm up to a major interview with John Suffolk on the challenges of public sector IT projects. You can download the issue from http://www.eurim.org.uk/activities/tgdialogues/Why_do_we_never_learn.pdf or register at <http://www.transformationjournal.co.uk/thisissue.htm>.

The points highlighted by the editor (his choice, not mine) spell out a simple message:

“There have been many studies into the causes of failed computer systems over the past 35 years. Much excellent guidance material has been produced, from the days of the Ministry of Technology to the latest guidance from the Office of Government Commerce....

“Confusion and conflict over objectives and priorities and split responsibility for policy and implementation commonly mean that no-one knows what success looks like or is responsible for achieving it from conception to completion ...

“The main reason why such problems persist, long after they were first identified, is that those who plan clever policies using fashionable technologies are promoted to repeat their mistakes elsewhere, before they have time to learn ...

“Those facing global competition [i.e. in the Private Sector] can no longer afford to try to conceal problems, as opposed to earning reputations for acting fast to resolve them ...

“Government systems do not fail because they are larger and more complex than those of the private sector, nor is their size and complexity necessitated by most underlying applications ...

“Once a proposal has been said to have ministerial support it acquires a mystical status – to be justified and defended at almost any cost, until such time as a new minister can announce that “technologies have changed” and thus justify a new approach ...

“There have been many reports into why systems fail, especially in the public sector. There have been many fewer on why systems succeed ...

“The successful implementation of a change programme [in the private sector] is not only well rewarded but is one of the common routes to the top. In consequence those at the top [often] have personal experience of what is entailed – unlike most of those at the top of central government.”

The overall theme of the issue is on “Managing large-scale projects” and I strongly recommend downloading it and reading the other articles, especially the interview with John Suffolk.

2) Towards an E-Crime Prevention Partnership

The proposed three year objective for the EURIM E-Crime Group is to lead work on a national strategic e-Crime Reduction Partnership to:

- (a) cut online crime and disorder: as in the off-line world, people are bothered by the petty activity that causes them a nuisance as well as by more serious criminal activity;
- (b) reduce risk and increase awareness; and
- (c) increase UK business and consumer confidence in the safety and security of the on-line world: we want to confirm the UK's leadership in Internet policing and governance. The position of London as the leading global hub for international financial services, trade, commerce and disputes resolution makes this essential for the future.

This is an ambitious objective and the first stage is to secure the necessary high-level buy-in, including champions at Chief Executive or main board level who will deliver very public support and commitment from the mainstream of their business, not just their security team. Please e-mail Alun Michael alunmichaelmp@parliament.uk with the necessary contact details if your chief executive would welcome an invitation accordingly.

In parallel, the group will provide political briefings on relevant issues, activities and progress, including the work of groups such as the Information Security Awareness Forum or the Cybersecurity Knowledge Transfer Network as well as evidence and responses to relevant Parliamentary Committees including the Home Affairs, Justice and Business Select Committees. These activities will be dovetailed with those of the Personal Identity and Data Sharing Group (setting the policy agenda on information assurance and security) and of the Skills Group (using the need to greatly enhance security skills, at every level, as the cutting edge of a new approach to workforce updating).

3) Identity Management & Information Assurance

The Personal Identity and Data Sharing Group has an equally ambitious long-term agenda, beginning with a meeting on 6th June to plan the implementation of the recommendation in the recent position paper on information sharing protocols http://www.eurim.org.uk/activities/pi/PERID_ISPpaper.pdf for an exemplar against which information sharing protocols can be benchmarked and audited. The immediate objective remains, however, to identify and publicise existing good practice to facilitate constructive, cost effective and timely responses to the recommendations expected from the information security reviews (Cabinet Office, HMRC etc.) due for publication over the next month or so. That process began with EURIM members actively supporting the formation of the Information Security Awareness Forum www.theisaf.org and the production and publication of:

The Directors' Guides to Managing Information Risk

Each of these guides is a single sheet of A5. Together they provide the easy-to-read, top down guidance for busy policy makers and decision takers that is all too often missing. They also help place the issues into mainstream business context: *“Information risk programmes ... should ... directly and demonstrably support each of the organisation’s stated objectives (e.g. breed client confidence especially amongst the organisation’s target client sectors), not just reduce the aggregate impact of information failures and security breaches.”*

The guides come in three sets, downloadable from <http://www.theisaf.org/kzscripts/default.asp?cid=6>

- Organisation: “Why Information Risk is a Board-level Issue”, “Realising the Benefits”, “Regulation and Legislation”
- People: “Governance and Structures”, “Creating a Strong Information Handling Culture”
- Process: “Information Risk Management Approach”, “Information Risk Mitigation”, “Programmes, Methodologies and Standards”

The next task is to demonstrate that good practice works.

Keys to the Kingdom?- showcase of current good practice- 10th June 4pm – 8 pm, Attlee Suite

Recent data losses have placed millions of citizens at risk of impersonation and destroyed trust in the ability of government (even more than the private sector) to safeguard the information in its care. Meanwhile that collected and stored grows daily, supposedly to improve public services, health care, welfare, consumer protection and national security and we increasingly depend on digital identities to buy, sell, travel and even enter buildings. But large organisations and even whole industries have operated successful, secure, cross-boundary identity management and data sharing systems for many years. We need to learn from their experience to help restore confidence in the on-line world.

On 20th May PITCOM has a meeting on “Trustworthy e-Government”. This will raise many questions, some of which will, we hope, be answered on 10th June when EURIM and the All Party Parliamentary Group on Identity Fraud are organising a showcase at which parliamentarians and policy advisors can witness demonstrations of proven, large-scale, secure identity management and information assurance systems from both private and public sector. This event is being organised with the assistance of Alcatel-Lucent, Atos Origin, DeLaRue, Experian, Eidentity, Fujitsu, IBM, IdenTrust the Identity and Passport Service and Vocalink (the transaction specialists behind the BACS payment and LINK ATM infrastructures for over 40 years). They have been particularly asked to cover experience with the people processes that the technology is there to support, rather than the technology itself. The showcase will, in turn, inform the next PITCOM meeting, on 24th June, when the Rt Hon Paul Murphy MP, chairman of the cross-departmental committee on IT and Information Security is due to address PITCOM on Data Security and Information Assurance.

4) Addressing the Worsening UK IT Skills Shortfall

Are Immigration and Off-shoring really the best answer?

On 2nd April at the annual conference of the University Professors and Heads of Computing there was a stark presentation http://www.cphc.ac.uk/docs/cphc-lmackinnon_infogroup.ppt by Lachlan Mackinnon of the way in which the number of ICT students going through the Universities has halved over the past seven years. The intake is now below that in 1996 and is set to fall further. Meanwhile over 70% of the indigenous UK ICT workforce in 2020 has already graduated. We therefore need to retrain and re-skill those already in the workforce on a very much larger scale than has been the case in recent decades. That means not only programmes to give basic skills to the socially excluded, the focus of current government spend, but also to retrain those whose current high level skills are no longer in demand.

One of the areas where action is urgent as well as important, is to improve on-line and network security skills at all levels: from “safer surfing” by end-users, through secure systems design, implementation and use by professionals, technicians, managers and administrators, to computer forensics and investigation for law enforcement. The Cybersecurity Knowledge Transfer Network is supporting a programme to “map” the current situation. EURIM members and observers with relevant information, expertise, responsibilities and resources will be invited to a workshop on 4th June to build on the paper http://www.eurim.org.uk/activities/ecrime/PIC07_techapp_skills.pdf and create a spreadsheet covering the relevant players and their activities: from skills definitions, accreditations and qualifications to courses, materials, vetting and mentoring. The aim is that this exercise will also cross-fertilise with those being conducted by ENISA, IAAC and the Metropolitan Police regarding crime prevention for small firms, information assurance, reporting and intelligence, vulnerability reduction, investigation and prosecution activities - all of which have skills dimensions.

The spreadsheet will be circulated for errors and omissions to be corrected and presented alongside an updated analysis at a second workshop, hopefully before the summer break, to discuss the pattern revealed and agree recommendations. It is hoped the process will also identify who is willing to work with whom to achieve what - because the aim is to stimulate action, not just debate. It is also hoped that we will identify a “host” to maintain and publish the spreadsheet as an ongoing service, ideally linked to other current and planned initiatives. Please e-mail eurim@eurim.org to register interest in the overall workforce skills programme and/or the Cybersecurity KTN skills exercise.

5) Progress with EURIM Three Year Strategy

The working group planning teams have been asked to recommend objectives for 2011 and then work backwards, consulting their registered participants as to what it is practical to deliver over time – whether via EURIM or, more likely, in partnership with others. The intention is to complete the process in time to submit a full set of already agreed forward plans to the next Council meeting in mid-July. If you have not recently received an e-mail saying “To EURIM XXX Group” then you are probably not registered for that group and should e-mail eurim@eurim.org if you wish to take part in this process, saying which group(s) you wish to be active in helping support.

The draft objective of the *Knowledge Economy* Group, parliamentary chair to be confirmed, industry chair Chris Godwin (IBM), is “to foster attract and retain knowledge based business operations that could be based anywhere in the world and/or move at short notice”. Potential volunteers for the driving team should e-mail fairbrotherl@parliament.uk for an invitation to the next planning meeting.

The overall objectives of the *E-Crime Group*, chaired by the Rt Hon Alun Michael are outlined above in section 2 of this newsletter. This group has 190 registered participants currently receiving information on relevant initiatives at the operational level.

The new parliamentary chair of the *Personal Identity and Data Sharing* Group, Philip Dunne MP, recently wrote to all 260 registered participants outlining the objectives put to those attending the group meeting on 18th April presided over by Stephen Darvill (Logica), the industry chair. These are:

- *Parliamentary and political*: to change the nature of current debate on data protection and information assurance by showing that secure electronic identity management and information sharing are already commonplace, including in the public sector, and that the need is to replicate, reinforce and build on existing good practice.
- *Industrial and professional*: to provide a neutral umbrella for officials to meet with industry (users as well as suppliers and consultants) to discuss practical co-operation in overcoming fragmentation and confusion regarding responsibilities, liabilities and governance. To share experience of existing processes for handling interactions between those who do not trust each other as well as between those who do.

Subject to discussion at a panel meeting on 11th June, the **Transformational Government** Group, chaired by Margaret Moran MP, with 90 registered participants, seeks to:

- Help rebuild trust that the ICT industry (users as well as suppliers) can work in partnership with Government and the Public Sector to reliably and securely deliver effective, socially inclusive, joined-up, public services.
- Ensure the effective monitoring (including political) of policy formation and implementation with regard to citizen-centric services, including performance monitoring based on the front-line experiences of both deliverers and recipients.

The draft long term objective of the *Workforce Skills* group (60 participants, parliamentary chair Ian Stewart MP, industry chair to be confirmed), is “to create and maintain a globally competitive UK workforce at all levels, from basic technical and linguistic competence through system specification, development, integration and operation to product and service research, design, development and implementation, using the need to ensure and protect world class communications infrastructures for the 2012 Olympics to expedite progress”. The immediate objective, as stated in section 4 above, is to pilot a new approach, focussed on the “protection” skills where action is even more urgent.

Malcolm Harbour MEP has just agreed to chair the parliamentary stream of the *Communications Regulation* group (110 registered). David Harrington (CMA) is industry chair. The group has yet to discuss long-term objectives but the immediate task is to ensure balanced inputs to the reviews currently under way in Brussels.

6) Changes to Board and Council

Philip Dunne MP has been co-opted to the Board and we give our thanks to Lord McNally and Lord Randall of St Budeaux who have resigned. Richard Croft has replaced Terry Carr (also of Easynet) on council and Hamish Sandison now represents Field Fisher Waterhouse instead of Bird & Bird. Roger Gale MP has resigned from Council, having helped guide us from the very start. So too have Michael Gough and John Riley who have left the NCC and Computer Weekly respectively. We owe a particular thanks to Roger Gale who drove most of our work on Communications Regulation for EURIM's first decade as well as being an active member of the editorial panel, checking for readability as well as for balance and intellectual rigour. We owe similar thanks to John Riley, who has been on Council for nearly as long as Roger, helping advise on relations with the technical press and the priorities as seen by them and their readers.

That gives us vacancies for both parliamentary and corporate members on Council. The majority of business is now conducted electronically with four physical meetings a year, each of approximately 90 minutes. The main task is to help ensure that our work programme is relevant to members' current and prospective priorities and adds value to that which is being progressed via other channels. We also have vacancies on the audit committee (staff contracts and our own governance) and editorial panel (quality and balance of published material).

Please e-mail the company secretary, kate.norman@eurim.org , if you would be interested.