

To EURIM Members and Observers
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The Information
Society Alliance
EURIM



EURIM Newsletter September 2009

1) Policy Dragons' Dens at the Party Conferences

Parliamentary Candidates to grill EURIM members on the importance of our priorities to their voters
The Dragons' Dens will be in the Bournemouth Conference Centre, 13.00 – 14.00 on 21st September, Meeting Room 3 of the Hilton Hotel, Brighton 12.30 – 14.30 on 30th September and the Mezzanine Room of the Manchester Central Conference Centre 13.00 – 14.00 on 7th October.

The objectives are:

- To identify those "Information Society" issues that will feature in the election campaign and those likely to speak on them, so that we can plan accordingly.
- To give a publicity platform for industry to say why they think issues are of political interest.
- To give candidates a publicity platform to say why they think they are of interest.

The Dens will begin with short presentations on why constituency voters should be concerned about topics such as:

- Internet Governance (social inclusion and safety in the on-line world);
- Public Service Delivery (efficiency and value for money); and
- Attracting/creating the jobs of the future (which could be based anywhere in the world).

A panel of parliamentary candidates will then open the questioning, with an opportunity for further questions from other current and would-be candidates in the audience. We will be asking presenters - Nominet and Atkins have so far agreed (and to help with venue and catering costs) - to provide advance material so that we can organise press invitations and releases (embargoed until the event).

Stephen Timms hopes to be able to drop by towards the end of the Brighton Den and has supplied a message on the importance of the issues and the value of the exercise to candidates. We are awaiting confirmation of contributions from LibDem and Conservative MPs in Bournemouth and Manchester.

Attendance is unfortunately limited to those with conference passes because the venues are inside the security rings but we hope to report the results.

2) Resetting Political Agendas for Successful and Cost Effective Public Service Delivery

Ensuring the next generation does not, yet again, repeat the mistakes of the past

The Chief Executives of the Audit Commission (Stephen Bundred) and of IBM UK (Brendon Riley) have both been personally involved in turning round bankrupt bureaucracy ridden empires but the techniques used have not always been successful. There are pre-conditions for success.

On the evening of 24th September they will introduce a discussion with Parliamentary Candidates on what is achievable and how to ensure it is indeed achieved. Liam Maxwell, Author of the controversial paper "Its Ours" (on public sector information governance) and himself a local government e-champion, will add a political dimension.

This event is being organised in co-operation with the Government Relations Group of the Worshipful Company of Information Technologists and current Parliamentary members are also invited, whether or not they are planning to stand again, to help inform and enliven the discussion. There will also be a number of places for members and observers with policy, procurement and planning responsibility and experience to contribute. Please e-mail eurim@eurim.org if you would like an invitation.

The Public Service Delivery Group met on 2nd September to agree press and publicity plans for releasing the summary of [good practice in planning and procurement](#)¹ that is now on the website: We were asked to attempt to further summarise the key messages into a one by A4 sheet for use at the planned briefing meetings with Select Committees before and after the next election and with Parliamentary Candidates.

Stephen Timms, who has had “Digital Britain” added to his responsibilities as Financial Secretary to the Treasury, welcomed the result as “a brave attempt to summarise thousands of pages of reports and guidance into a simple crib sheet for politicians. I hope it will cause those responsible for policy planning, procurement and implementation to follow up the references to the Audit Commission, BCS, Intellect, NAO and OGC material on which it is based. It is a useful aide memoire for us all, as well as a succinct summary of what the next generation needs to learn, to avoid repeating the mistakes of the past.”

3) Setting Coherent and Practical Agendas for the Reform of Information Governance

Reconciling the pressures for data protection, sharing and security

The invitation for entries to the [competition](#)² for succinct on-line material on the **Basic Principles** of Information Governance is now on the website and will be promoted, via the Council of Professors and Heads of Computing, as a student project on University multi-media courses – hence the March 2010 deadline for entries. The British Screen Advisory Council will provide judges from among the main employers of multi-media graduates to complement those from the target audience of future politicians. We hope those with professional or political interests in the issues will help brief and support those working on entries. There is no embargo on publicity. Early submissions will be placed on the website when received. The intention is that all entrants receive publicity for their talents as well as material for their employment portfolios. For further details e-mail eurim@eurim.org.

From security by accident to security by design

The **Security by Design** sub-group now has a weekly teleconference to work up its report covering the changes needed in market behaviour and the means of bringing them about for us to have confidence in the security, reliability and resilience of next generation products, services and networks. Material is placed on the website as available, beginning with the survey of recent reports and recommendations. A summary of threats is expected to be the next section to be mounted.

From toxic liabilities to valuable assets

In parallel, the **Value of Information** sub-group is working up its report for publication in October. Once again draft material is being placed in the members’ area of the website for use by those working on policy studies. The overall objective is to summarise the professional guidance already available to justify the investment necessary to ensure that databases can be exploited as “secure and valuable assets” rather than simply held as “leaky sources of toxic liabilities”.

It now looks as though the material will soon be available for us also to look at the current state of **Information Quality** without having to collate data from scratch. The current anecdotal evidence is alarming: a 2% error rate is perhaps inevitable. 20% is not. Over 30% is unfit for purpose as well as unforgivable. But the consequences of even 2% can be appalling if the system is to be used for decisions affecting personal livelihood.

¹ http://www.eurim.org.uk/activities/pubproc/0904-Good_Practice_in_Procurement.pdf

² http://www.eurim.org.uk/whats_new/events/bpcomp/bpcomp.php

Rationalising public sector approaches to the ID market place

Our personal identities are increasingly “federated” internationally across criminal syndicates as well as “locally” across the departments and agencies of central and local government. Is it now practical to persuade government to follow the spirit, not just letter, of some of the recommendations in Sir James Crosby’s report? There is clearly a need for a fresh look at **ID Governance** but it is still proving difficult to structure a group to look at the policy issues rather than the technologies. Please e-mail eurim@eurim.org if you would like to help.

Making a reality of secure sharing

Recent exercises to promote secure information **Sharing** between central and local government have encountered teething problems, including consistency of assessments as to whether local systems are ready to be connected to supposedly more secure central systems. The duplication of such exercises, with different approaches to security, raises questions about value for money - with those under severe budget pressure expected to follow different processes with different departments. A meeting on 21st September to discuss practical issues arising from recent exercises is expected to lead to a follow up programme.

4) Skills for the Workforce of Digital Britain

Ensuring employability after the recovery

Recession has led to a sharp increase in demand for personal re-skilling among those being laid off. Meanwhile Further and Higher Education funding is under severe pressure. Project 3 (Digital Skills) of the [Digital Britain Implementation Plan](#)³ lists a number of relevant proposals. These include “a new Higher Education Funding framework” to “ensure” universities have clear incentives to respond quickly to support emerging areas of potential growth, and the creation of HE-industry forums in key sectors to help align supply and demand. This should offer opportunities for EURIM members to input views on the changes needed to ensure the continuing employability of the current workforce, as well as of those who will join it over the next decade.

Any such exercise should be in co-operation with our observers in the Sector Skills Councils but it will also need political and corporate backing, including placing UK initiatives into global context, if it is to produce worthwhile results. Please e-mail eurim@eurim.org if you would like to take part.

5) Tripartite Internet Crime and Security Initiative

Making the on-line world safe for your business, your customers, your parents and your children

[The Digital Britain Implementation Plan](#) contains sections on illegal file sharing, digital security, personal digital safety and on-line consumer safety. That on Digital Security includes support for the Internet Governance Forum, the role of ICANN, reserve powers over domain names, a major network resilience test and the formation of a Tripartite Crime and Security Initiative chaired by The Rt Hon Alun Michael MP.

The Tripartite Initiative will “look at the spectrum of issues and responsibilities and at a practical level look at promoting new efforts in the self regulatory sphere”. The first stage is to organise an audit of “reality”, including the scale and nature of the problems and the concerns of the communities affected. Helping organise that audit is the current focus of the EURIM E-Crime Group.

Within a couple of weeks we expect to be able to announce a workshop, to be held after the recess, to scope that audit. In the meantime we are seeking to identify those willing and able to contribute, including not just information of known provenance on what is happening but also the time and resources (or funding) to help collate and make sense of that information. We are also seeking to identify those working on similar exercises so that we can invite them to the workshop with a view to exchanging information and avoiding duplication of effort. Please e-mail eurim@eurim.org if you would like to assist. A note of what you expect to be able to contribute would be most helpful.

³ http://www.culture.gov.uk/images/publications/DB_ImplementationPlanv6_Aug09.pdf

The Cybersecurity Day on 24th September organised by John Walker with Nottingham City Council is now fully booked with a waiting list. Hopefully it will provide a model for other regional exercises.

6) Communications Regulation

Putting UK initiatives into EU context so as to make better use of members' time

On 27th July the EURIM Communications Group was given a list of the main issues expected from Directorate General for Information Society over the next 12 months. It then agreed a short-term action plan to look at the scrutiny process for the Digital Economy Bill expected on 15th October.

The sections on Intellectual Property and Copyright Enforcement may well split the membership. The best use of time will therefore be to acknowledge the differences of opinion and seek to help structure constructive debate accordingly. Patent reform is likely to be a 2010 issue under the Swedish Presidency. Support for work on originality, including the trace-ability, ownership and provenance of components might be worthwhile and would fit with the work of the Security by Design sub-group.

Longer term there is a need to look at the future of Ofcom, including preparing for the performance review envisaged during the scrutiny of the legislation that created the agency, not just in the context of current plans to extend its remit. This was seen as an exercise for 2010: perhaps with preparatory work alongside that for the induction programmes for new MPs, while our parliamentary members are pre-occupied campaigning.

The problems with the European Procurement Directives appear peculiar to the UK. It was therefore agreed that these be referred to the Public Service Delivery Group - which might begin with a meeting in Holland to learn from their experience - ideally before Christmas.

It was also agreed that we should take a look at on-line consumer protection issues, including data protection from a consumer perspective, with a view to organising a joint meeting with consumer groups and Commission members in Brussels in Quarter 1 of 2010. If so, this should link into a long term strategy for better meeting the needs of on-line consumers, including in any review of the e-Commerce Directive. One of the objectives of such an exercise should be to encourage better mutual understanding and co-operation between the supplier communities, as represented in (for example) Digital Europe and groups like the Consumer Association and its peers.

The Group expects to review progress on 26th October.