

To EURIM Members and Observers
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The Information
Society Alliance
EURIM



EURIM Newsletter December 2009

1) 50 Seats Where “the Information Society Vote” Might Tip the Balance

Programmes for the Class of 2010

The programme of the Knowledge Economy Group is focussed on topics suggested by the Class of 2010. This is widely expected to be the largest intake of new MPs since 1946. Please e-mail eurim@eurim.org if you were unable to attend the event on 10th December on the potential economic and ecological impact of smart technologies and would like copies of the scripts or to listen to the recording. We are helping the Industry and Parliament Trust with invitations and content for their event for candidates on 11th March covering Parliament’s own use of IT and “innovating out of recession”. Four candidates have so far agreed to act as judges on the competition for multi-media material on Information Governance (see below). The closing date for entries is 1st March so we can hold the awards ceremony before the “bookies favourite” date for announcing the election.

Securing the jobs of the future for your constituency in the face of the rising tide of globalisation

The pace of globalisation has accelerated over the past two years, driven by a combination of freer trade, the maturing of the Internet and the emergence of highly skilled workforces in the world’s most populous nations. Global players can no longer afford the “multinational” model, with functions duplicated in local subsidiaries. Instead, functions are increasingly integrated across national boundaries and located in those countries which offer an educated population, law and order, an IPR regime that encourages and rewards innovation and a world class infrastructure (power supplies, communications etc.) at affordable and predictable (tax) cost. They are being moved out of nations and regions with confused regulatory policies (such as carbon reduction commitments which fail to differentiate between energy intensity and energy efficiency) and/or which take little or no account of the needs and priorities of business. Please e-mail eurim@eurim.org if you would like to help review the paper being drafted to update the previous EURIM paper: “A Flourishing Knowledge Economy.”

Securing world class local communications for those who will employ your voters and their children

Work has started on assembling the team to help brief and support those candidates, from all parties, who plan to use campaigns for local access to “real” broadband (at least 10 megs, preferably 100, symmetric) as part of their election campaigns. This exercise is expected to be run in co-operation with the All-Party Communications Group, the Independent Community Networks Association and at least one of the Regional Innovation and Efficiency Partnerships. Several of the candidates who participated in the policy Dragons’ Dens at the party conferences have already volunteered for the steering committee. We aim to also work with our existing parliamentary members to ensure the material reaches those working on mainstream party policies. Please email eurim@eurim.org if you would like to join the team assembling the material.

2) From Toxic Liability to Strategic Asset: Security by Design not Afterthought

From Toxic Liability to Strategic Asset: Unlocking the Value of Information

The Information Governance sub-group on Value of Information has published a one page summary http://www.eurim.org.uk/activities/ig/0911-Value_Summary.pdf of its six page status report http://www.eurim.org.uk/activities/ig/0909-Unlocking_the_Value_of_Information.pdf on the means of turning information files from potential liabilities (erroneous and insecure) into strategic resources. These are supported by a micro-site of resources <http://www.eurim.org.uk/activities/ig/voi/voi.php>.

Professor Jim Norton, who chaired the sub-group, said: “Treating information as the very valuable asset it increasingly is, provides a ‘win-win’ situation. It helps establish a culture where information is valued and exploited appropriately and at the same time provides the incentives for a more responsible approach to security and quality.” Dave Waltho, Head of Government Affairs, Public Sector (SAS) who, with Professor Chris Higson of London Business School, drafted the report and identified the material for the micro-site said: “What we don’t value, we don’t take care of. All organisations acknowledge the importance of measuring, protecting and optimising the potential value of pounds or property, yet most do not apply the same disciplines to their information – a strategic asset of at least equal importance.”

Can Society afford to rely on security by afterthought not design?

The sub-group on Security by Design has circulated a draft report on the need to embed security into planning and procurement from the very start, rather than treating it as a later add-on. The combination of convergence and complexity and the transition towards new online business models, such as cloud computing, make action increasingly urgent at the service, system and product levels. To be effective this also needs government, security services and industry, both suppliers and users, to agree common terminologies and shared processes for co-operation. Success depends on changes in market behaviour, including internationally. The main role of governments is therefore as intelligent customers rather than as regulators. Securing such a change of approach will require action at both political and professional levels. Please e-mail eurim@eurim.org if you would like to help.

Ensuring that public sector information is fit for purpose: including policy decisions and scrutiny

We have agreed to work with the Audit Commission and others on a high level event to collate what is already known about the variable quality of the sources of information available for policy formation, service delivery and performance measurement. The event should also highlight the savings that can be made by improving accuracy and timeliness as well as the danger of basing decisions on that which is out of date, distorted or wrong: whether by accident or design. Hopefully it will lead to an exercise to bring about the necessary culture change, including by briefing the new intake of MPs on the questions they should ask regarding the provenance of the “evidence” put before them – and the answers that should give them comfort and those which should not. That leads back to the Value of Information report (above) recommendations regarding the role of the Knowledge Council.

Rationalising the hotchpotch of government public and private sector identity systems

Budgetary pressures may be about to achieve what a decade of debate has not, an implosion of identity systems around those that are operational, valued, useful and respected. The pressures leading to that implosion may also enable us, at long last, to focus debate on the issues of governance and interoperability, including across organisational, public-private and international boundaries, without being dragged into debate over the merits of particular approaches. The Identity Governance sub-group will also be asked to look at issues like voter registration, becoming of critical importance as government, central and local, needs to consult on difficult decisions. Please e-mail eurim@eurim.org to register interest.

3) Achieving More for Less: Improving Public Service Procurement and Delivery

Ensuring that good practice is understood, encouraged and followed: from the top down

The Public Service Delivery Procurement sub-group reviewed progress on 18th November. It had been relatively successful with cover in the technical press for its report <http://www.eurim.org.uk/activities/pubproc/0909-Good Practice in Procurement.pdf> and one page summary <http://www.eurim.org.uk/activities/pubproc/0909ProcurementSummary.pdf> but this was not commonly read by the types of decision taker who most need to be “educated”. Connecting with national media is not easy because stories are usually pigeon-holed as IT, procurement and boring – unless they go wrong. More positively we are in contact with the Public Accounts Committee and the Treasury, Defence, Public Administration and Justice select committees with a view to organising meetings before or after the election.

Holland is often cited as being better at public sector ICT planning and procurement, although our Dutch contacts appear surprised that others think they are a good example. Nonetheless we are

planning to visit them on 4th February with a view to comparing experiences and planning an exercise to harvest experience from other EU member states.

Co-operation with IPT and others on a possible exchange programme for MPs and Candidates

The proposal to organise a small, high level conference/dinner on procurement has been replaced by that of an exchange programme, possibly in co-operation with the Industry and Parliament Trust (IPT) and Intellect, focussed on developing a cadre of a dozen or so MPs who are interested in and well-briefed on Public Service Delivery and good practice in planning and procurement. I will be meeting with IPT to discuss, hopefully before the Christmas break.

Co-operation with the RIEPs and others on good practice in shared network procurement

The group agreed that the exercise on identifying guidance on good practice in the planning procurement of shared network services should be linked to that on producing material for candidates to support their involvement in local “real” broadband exercises: including for local council services, business use, telemedicine and education. If practical, it should also be progressed in co-operation with Regional Innovation and Efficiency Partnerships (or their locally organised successors) and the various other groups involved with local initiatives.

Rationalising the procurement of security and putting it into the mainstream

On 12th January the group will discuss proposals for an exercise on security procurement, to follow up the Security by Design report (see above) and to address the issues of procuring security consultancy and advice, where the fragmentation and overheads of current routines are said to increase cost and restrict supply without necessarily improving quality.

4) Creating a UK E-Crime Reduction Partnership

Securing top level support and demonstrating progress

On 30th November the E-Crime Group was briefed on progress with the Internet Governance Forum and plans for the launch of the E-Crime Reduction Partnership as announced in the Digital Britain Report. The remit of the Internet Governance Forum is likely to be renewed. We now have to demonstrate that a free and business friendly Internet can tackle the linked issues of governance and accountability.

The EURIM E-Crime Group had found widespread agreement on the need for a partnership approach over a year ago, but until the publication of the Digital Britain Report there was little sign of the senior level support necessary to produce results. That has now changed with both ministerial involvement and signs of top-level support from within industry.

The forward programme for the creation of the main E-Crime Reduction Partnership begins with an Academic Workshop in mid January, to bring together what is already known, and a separate ministerial meeting to enlist top-level support from government and industry. In mid-February there will be a government-industry round table to enlist the support necessary for a major exercise to scope the issues and to justify and target the resources and actions necessary to achieve results. In parallel the EURIM E-Crime Group will seek to identify who is already willing to work with who, to achieve what. The intention is to help ensure that the partnership can be launched with a portfolio of projects already under way that demonstrate that co-operation can achieve results.

There was a lively and constructive discussion at the meeting on issues that needed to be addressed and approaches that should be taken. Among the points made were that we need to start with the non-technical basics so that we know what we doing and why. That means beginning with scanning and analysis before moving on to response and then assessing the success. We also need the on-line equivalent of situational crime prevention - making criminals feel they are being observed: using “visibility” to highlight aberrant behaviour and change the risk-reward equation.

There were differences over responsibility for action, from “The need for freedom of the Internet means that users should be responsible for their own use” to “Only market leaders can make it easier to protect yourself” and “How will a strong personal ID system protect against some-one pretending to

be a legitimate website”. There did, however, appear to be agreement that excessive reliance on technology can reduce human suspicion and we needed to pay more attention to people processes.

Moreover, responsibility also has to be distributed. It is not just user education. Just as road safety is not just driving lessons but intelligent advice and tiers of responsibility: car safety, traffic management etc. We therefore need partnership on the basis of shared responsibility.

At the end of the meeting there were offers to lead or contribute on awareness, intelligence sharing, network forensics, skills, first point of contact, child protection and to co-ordinate contacts and programmes for specific communities, such as small firms and charities. There were also suggestions to build on the work of the EURIM Security by Design exercise.

The next step is to circulate the meeting report, call for additional contributions from those unable to be present and to organise meetings of those volunteering in specific areas. In some areas, such as awareness and child protection, these are likely to be with others - to brief members on what is already happening and how to work with and through those already in the lead. Please e-mail eurim@eurim.org for an invitation to participate.

5) Skills

Building the Security section of the National Skills Academy for IT

Funding for the National Skills Academy for IT - www.e-skills.com/e-skills-UK-in-work/2468 - has been announced. e-Skills UK has agreed to host a meeting early in the New Year on security skills with a view to assembling a consortium to exploit the opportunities this will offer. The proposed aim is to assemble a portfolio of qualifications, courses and materials to meet known employer needs ready for the launch of the Academy in the Autumn. The E-Crime Reduction Partnership scoping exercise (see above) should then provide evidence to justify the effort of developing additional offerings to address the gaps identified. Please e-mail eurim@eurim.org for an invitation to that meeting.

The overall opportunity for changing the nature of debate with regard to updating the skills of the UK workforce is, of course, much wider than security skills. Subject to the level of support from corporate members, we may well organise a group to look at the political actions necessary to make it easier for individuals and employers to exploit the opportunities that will be on offer to update their skills.

6) Communications

Review of EU progress and plans

At the last group meeting Malcolm Harbour made the point that substantive initiatives are likely to wait until the appointment of a new Commissioner in the New Year. The next meeting to review progress will be on the morning of 18th January. The presentation meeting in London on the Ofcom annual plan (<http://www.ofcom.org.uk/consult/condocs/draftannplan1011/>) is that afternoon.

There has been a low level of take-up of EU funding available for next generation access projects, which may be due to difficulty in finding matched funding. There was consensus that there is a need for clear, positive state aid guidelines. It was suggested that there was a possible role for a group in Brussels which would act as a single point of contact to clarify the European position to those in the UK. EURIM could undertake an exercise looking at “guidelines on planning and procurement,” which would cross link to state aid guidelines and provide independent guidance. This suggestion was subsequently agreed by the Public Service Delivery Group (see above) and will be progressed as a joint exercise. A significant number of parliamentary candidates at the party conferences wanted to be involved in local exercises to get at least 10 Mbs symmetric broadband to their constituency within a few years and the members of the group agreed to work together to assemble material to help them (see section 1 above).

There has been an offer from BIS to hold a consultation roundtable on the “proposed new duties for Ofcom on resilience”, separate to the main consultation process which ended on 30 October 2009. Please e-mail eurim@eurim.org if you would wish to attend.