

To EURIM Members and Observers  
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The Information  
Society Alliance  
**EURIM**



## EURIM Newsletter March 2010

### 1) Broadband Access Moves Centre Stage

*Government and opposition both pledge 100 mbps and universal service*

When the draft [Guide for Candidates on Local Access to Broadband](#)<sup>1</sup> was circulated in February we were told by lobbyists for major players that no one needed 100 mbps and that 2 mbps was sufficient for the final 10%. Barely a week after the final draft was published the [FCC announced](#)<sup>2</sup> a target of 100 mbps to 100 million Americans with gbps links to community hubs - such as schools. A week later the [Prime Minister made equally ambitious promises](#)<sup>3</sup> for the UK, including for rural broadband.

There may be argument as to what such promises mean but the link between broadband provision, social inclusion and reducing the cost of public service delivery has now been made. The BSG report "[Broadband Infrastructure: The Service and Application Providers' View](#)"<sup>4</sup> identified that end users increasingly want and expect quality of delivered service, including reliable response times – not just “best efforts”. In that context the report queried whether upgrading the “last mile broadband speed” was more important than addressing: out-of-date browsers on user PCs, in home wiring, peering capacity, connections to hosting facilities and contention in the network. “The reality of the multiple pinch points in today's broadband infrastructure is that most service providers have to adapt their offer to work within uncertain end-to-end delivery conditions”. This also applies to those planning to offer “Cloud” computing services to make available the mass of public sector information to which the main parties also appear committed.

The next meeting of the [EURIM Comms group](#)<sup>5</sup>, on 12<sup>th</sup> April is due to receive an update on the new European Commission Universal Service review consultation and EU2020. It will then review progress with the exercise to identify guidance on the planning and procurement of shared network services. The aim is to do this by working with public and private sector user communities so as to help stimulate co-operation between Local Authorities, RIEPs (the regional innovation and efficiency partnerships which organise co-operation between consenting local authorities), RBCs (the Regional Broadband Consortia, already organising 100 mbps fibre pipes to schools) and the various consortia organising local community networks, supported by those with national interests and responsibilities.

The group also aims to update and re-issue the briefing material and resource website on “Local Access to Broadband” for when the new intake of MPs take their seats. The revised material should cover the current state of national and regional initiatives for provision and interoperability (e.g. PSN, NEN, COTS) and also include case studies covering benefits and applications (both fixed and mobile) and how issues (e.g. State Aid) have been addressed in the UK and elsewhere.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.eurim.org.uk/activities/commspol/1003-LocalBroadbandAccessBriefing.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> [http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs\\_public/attachmatch/DOC-296859A1.doc](http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DOC-296859A1.doc)

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.number10.gov.uk/Page22897>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.broadbanduk.org/content/view/385/7/>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.eurim.org.uk/activities/commspol/commspol.php>

## 2) Uncovering the Truth

### *Turning Public Records from Toxic Liabilities to Valuable Assets*

The report of the [round table](#)<sup>6</sup> on 22<sup>nd</sup> February with the Audit Commission, National Audit Office and others gives a good summary of the points made but you have to listen to the [recordings](#)<sup>7</sup> of the discussion to fully appreciate damage being done, including to public and professional confidence, by the scale and nature of the errors in public records. It is not just random errors but, for example, performance measures systemically divorced from the reality observed by, for example, patients and visitors. The good news was that some agencies and authorities, albeit too few, do indeed have records which can be relied on for accurate decisions. The task is to spread good practice.

The follow up meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> March was attended by representatives of most of the round table participants and agreed a follow up programme that will include briefing the new intake of MPs on the need to professionalise the management and use of public sector information, particularly that used by central government for policy formation and decision. The group next meets on 15<sup>th</sup> April to agree terms of reference and deliverables.

## 3) Ensuring Better Practice in the Planning and Procurement of Public Service Delivery

### *The pre-conditions for delivering more for less in practice*

The [report](#)<sup>8</sup> of the visit to Holland on 4<sup>th</sup> February illustrated that the grass is greener on the other side of the fence. The Dutch think the UK is a model of good practice. The biggest differences are that they regard 20 million euros as a big procurement and take an average of 3 months, compared to our 18 months. They, however, have some nonsenses of their own which we do not. The follow up meeting on [9<sup>th</sup> March](#)<sup>9</sup> agreed that we have much to learn from each other and should plan a return visit (Dutch MPs and officials to London) in the Autumn – in co-operation with Intellect and OGC.

That meeting also discussed the scale and nature of current problems regarding the public procurement of security advice, especially for services that are expected to share increasing amounts of data between departments. This at a time when standards are evolving, when there is a severe shortage of those with the skills necessary and where the means of assessing and accrediting both skills and experience are also changing. The first stage should be a guide to current and planned initiatives so that the most important and urgent of these can receive the political support necessary for success.

The problems are at their most acute when it comes to shared service delivery networks. This brings us back to broadband (see above) and the need for authoritative guidance of shared service procurement. The volunteers who agreed to progress this will be asked to report back to the Communications Group on 12<sup>th</sup> April. One of the deliverables is expected to be a round table to help players better understand what each other is doing. Hopefully that will also make it very much easier to assemble relevant briefing material for the new intake of MPs.

The group also agreed that we should re-issue the seven point guide to overall good practice in planning and procurement: “[Getting more for less](#)<sup>10</sup>” and the back-up material, the seven point guide to “[Unlocking the value of information](#)<sup>11</sup>” and its back up material and “[Let the People Speak](#)<sup>12</sup>”, the report on the EURIM Transformational Government hearings.

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.eurim.org.uk/activities/ig/100222report.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.eurim.org.uk/activities/ig/qoi/qoi.php>

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.eurim.org.uk/members/pubproc/100204\\_Netherlands\\_Visit\\_Notes.pdf](http://www.eurim.org.uk/members/pubproc/100204_Netherlands_Visit_Notes.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.eurim.org.uk/members/pubproc/100309report.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> [http://www.eurim.org.uk/whats\\_new/091021\\_PressRelease.doc](http://www.eurim.org.uk/whats_new/091021_PressRelease.doc)

<sup>11</sup> [http://www.eurim.org.uk/whats\\_new/091112\\_PressRelease.doc](http://www.eurim.org.uk/whats_new/091112_PressRelease.doc)

<sup>12</sup> [http://www.eurim.org.uk/whats\\_new/080729\\_TGReportPR.doc](http://www.eurim.org.uk/whats_new/080729_TGReportPR.doc)

## 4) Implementing the E-Crime Reduction Agenda

### *Making a reality of partnership*

On 3<sup>rd</sup> March Rt Hon Stephen Timms MP (Treasury and BIS) and Alan Campbell MP (Home Office) introduced the engagement meeting for the E-Crime Reduction Partnership scoping exercise. On 29<sup>th</sup> March Lord West introduced the Government/Business Roundtable to discuss this in more detail.

In parallel, sub-groups of the E-Crime Group are seeking to bring together those working on awareness programmes, skills, forensics, reporting, first point of contact etc. – to demonstrate that co-operation works.

The marketing budgets of the private sector are much greater than those for security – which are already under severe strain as problems mount. Moreover the cost of loss of customer confidence still appears to be greater than the actual losses to e-crime.

Securing the necessary resources for the scoping exercise will therefore depend on the support of those who wish to see more of their customers dealing confidently with them online. The public sector is different. The first report from the National Fraud Authority has also shown that it is losing rather more than the private sector.

The [draft report](#)<sup>13</sup> of the Security by Design subgroup now reflects comments from the reviewers and is undergoing final approval, including the provision of a four by A4 summary and a one by A4 politicians' "crib sheet". This begins with why action is needed - because we can no longer rely on retrofitting security to the complex systems on which modern society increasingly relies: "Security by Afterthought". After some discussion we agreed that this was more accurate than the catchier "Security by Accident" - although it was alleged that the latter description better fits major systems that have yet to undergo a serious security audit.

## 5) Identity Governance

### *Unravelling the Jungle of Unrealistic and Incompatible Expectations*

The planning meetings for the new Identity Governance group on 3<sup>rd</sup> February and 25<sup>th</sup> March were oversubscribed and the [report of the first meeting](#)<sup>14</sup> indicates why. There is a growing understanding of the need for government and the public sector to learn from the experience of the private sector in managing the exchange of identity information across international boundaries, jurisdictions and regulatory regimes, not just within the UK between different types of organisation. The meetings also found all-party consensus on the need for an impartial look at issues that the next government, of whatever complexion, will need to address.

This group will have two broad streams. One will look at voter registration, beginning with a summary of the approaches used in other parts of the world - as well as recent UK experience. The other will begin by looking at the different approaches to Identity Governance, public and private – again in both the UK and elsewhere. The latter group will have the task of considering whether it is possible to reconcile those based on process and "absolute" values with those based on contractual liability and probable risks. Both groups will be aiming to piggyback on the work of others wherever possible. The meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> March quickly decided *not* to look at voting systems or electronic voting. Both have been heavily studied by others and there appears little to add that would help illuminate debate.

## 6) Rebuilding and Sustaining the UK High-Tech Skills Base

### *Turning a crisis into an opportunity*

The funding crises in Further and Higher Education in the face of rising applications for vocational courses from all ages and at all levels, raise the need for innovative thinking. Ian Stewart MP and Philip Virgo (Secretary General) are due to attend the Annual Conference of the Professors and Heads

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<sup>13</sup> <http://www.eurim.org.uk/members/ig/sbd/SbD-DraftPaper.doc>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.eurim.org.uk/members/ig/100203idgreport.pdf>

of Computing in April to discuss possible ways forward, using co-operation on improving the quality and quantity of the UK information security skills base as a point of leverage.

Security skills appear to be a good point of leverage because of the rapidly rising demand for changing skills and the willingness to co-operate shown by the UK chapters of global professional bodies. It remains to be seen whether it is possible to overcome the intra-UK obstacles that have bedevilled past attempts to achieve critical mass in updating higher level skills.

## **7) Briefing Programmes for Parliamentary Candidates**

*Putting the material online for those too busy to attend*

Those out of London or too busy campaigning asked, back in December, for events to be webcast. It proved impractical to organise this at most of the venues we were offered so we recorded the events (audio only) and placed these, together with the presenters' slides and notes, in the [Knowledge Economy members' section of the website](#)<sup>15</sup>.

The events covered include those on:

- Smarter Britain (the cost effective delivery of public services).
- New Vision (joint with BSAC on policies for the audio-visual industries).
- Green IT (joint with Intellect) (links to be added shortly).

The case studies from the "Smarter Britain" event of using mobile technologies to strip out delivery costs are on the [Broadband resource website](#)<sup>16</sup> and we are looking for more examples, whether fixed or mobile, of where low cost, rapid payback, savings have been achieved. Please e-mail [eurim@eurim.org](mailto:eurim@eurim.org) if you have any.

## **8) Footnote**

In view of a recent press interest it may be worth reminding everyone that the Parliamentarians involved with EURIM receive no payment for doing so. We provide some staff support and on occasions we have covered some travel costs on a 'last resort' basis when UK representation is important at international events, such as the Internet Governance Forum. That is normally done in co-operation with other all-party groups, particularly ApComms and PITCOM.

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<sup>15</sup> <http://www.eurim.org.uk/activities/ke/ke.php>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.eurim.org.uk/activities/commspol/broadband.php>