



CECUA

Confederation of European Computer User Associations

Confédération Européenne des Associations d'Utilisateurs des Technologies de l'Information

Annual Report

for

2006

www.cecua.org

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CECUA Report for the year 2006

CECUA President's Message

Dear Colleagues,

In my report for 2005 I said that it looked like that all the work CECUA has done on behalf of the users is beginning to pay off. It still looks like that but lot of works still needs to be done. As Internet Governance receives more and more attention it becomes more and more difficult for CECUA to participate in relevant conferences and discussions. What is hampering CECUA most is acute lack of resources. Your executive is working very hard to get its voice heard. However, there are only so many conferences and publications it can manage. We need more people.

The issue of stakeholders has been the subject of discussion for many years. After all the discussion there seems to be three major stakeholders, i.e. Governments, Industry and something called Civil Society. The word civil society is a new kid on the block in this discussion. One definition is "Non-governmental, non-profit making organizations, networks and voluntary associations" (www.lgib.gov.uk/european_work/glossary.html).

Where do computer users fit into this definition? It seems that only groups of some sort are recognized as belonging to the civil society. This is a hierarchical society and individuals as such or non-organized groups of people having in common to be computer users are not recognized as part of civil society. They need representation to be accepted as part of civil society. They need an organization to represent them to become a part of civil society. And CECUA is the only independent organization consistently representing user issues. There are no others.

Civil Society is a melting pot of many kinds of interests. Most of those interests have little or nothing to do with the user interests as represented by CECUA. CECUA is focusing on practical issues facing the users in his or her daily use. There are many other diverse issues ranging from human rights issues like freedom of speech to ivory-tower issues like social life in Cyber Space or Second Life and represented by many civil society interests. Those non-user interest issues dominate the discussion and push practical user issues like represented by CECUA to the side. CECUA has to fight very hard to keep those issues on the table. Human rights issues are popular to talk about. Also ivory tower issues. Internet users do not worry too much about those issues. All they want is to be able to get information from the Internet, send and receive email on the Internet and purchase on the Internet. But they demand to be able to do so without being harassed by spamming, phishing and fraud. Civil Society really does not want to discuss those things. They refuse to face reality or recognize the truth like the ostrich hiding from danger by burying its head in the sand and hoping spamming, phishing and fraud will go away. It will no go away. It is getting worse and it will get worse. Even Governments are not immune any more. After the attack on the eGovernment services in Estonia it should be quite clear that Governments are on the target list. Maybe we need few more like that for Governments to wake up and do something.

Last year CECUA focused very hard on "Information Society for All" issues in general and "Internet Governance" issues in specific. This included speaking engagements by your

President and the Vice-President at various national and international conferences, very strong engagement by the Vice-President in the European Internet Foundation where he is a Board Member and publication of position papers on various issues.

Your President spoke at several conferences, such as:

At the Sources of Knowledge Conference in Helsinki in Finland (September 2006) organized by the Committee of the Regions (COR)

"Best practice: Internet use in education; The User: A Neglected resource?"

Brainstorming Ecole des Mines de Paris in France (December 2006)

"Internet visions and opportunities, Cyberspace versus Living Space"

Internet Governance in the OSCE Region Workshop in Paris in France (December 2006) organized by Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

User perspective

As the discussion progresses on Global Internet and Internet Governance user issues are slowly returning to the foreground. After many years of treating user issues as consumer marketing issues (the market knows best) we are beginning to see a turnaround. As an example of this turnaround CECUA again and again is being asked for in-dept discussion and position papers covering a wide range of issues both technical and legal. Also it has become evident that CECUA is the only independent user organization able to deliver such papers. This is a big challenge, both organizational and financial.

As reported in the CECUA 2006 report your Executive has been discussing the issue of setting up a separate organization, the CECUA Academy, to do research on user issues. The issues are not only technical but also legal, economic, social and political.

And last year your Executive started the CECUA Academy as a pilot project. A small research unit in Riga Latvia researched and delivered a report on user needs versus market offerings. The report titled: The users: Hostages of the Free Market? by Dr. Bruno MARTUZĀNS, Katrina SATAKI and Iveta SKUJINA is available on the Internet under www.cecuaacademy.org The report has been well received and raises many interesting points for discussion and further research. I would like to thank the researchers and also the CECUA high level expert group acting as an editorial board.

To pursue our course of action we need more human resources to participate in projects and events. We need to maintain the interest and support of our dedicated colleagues and also recruit new ones. If we manage both successfully we will be able to sustain and continue to develop a truly unique organization that CECUA is and also the CECUA Academy.

And I would like this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to the CECUA Executive, Board Members, Members and CECUA EIF high level expert Group for their excellent work and continued support.



Dr. Jon Thorhallsson, CECUA President

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From CECUA Vice President Alain Moscovitz

The year 2006 was a very active year for CECUA involving the Vice President in his role and representing CECUA on several occasions:

CECUA Vice President was elected to the Board of European Internet Foundation (EIF). The EIF held several meetings in Brussels attended by the Vice President focusing on user stakeholder issues and their relationship to other issues held by other stakeholders such as industry and government.

Ecole des Mines de Paris in France brainstorming conference in December 2006 focusing on "Internet visions and opportunities, Cyberspace versus Living Space" and including exchanges of different points of view : philosophic, ethical, managerial, legal etc.

"IT governance, and quality panorama" Co-organization of a conference on 5 July in Paris with ITIL, CMMI and COBIT with reference to providing advantages to IT departments and companies.

Meeting between CECUA and ISACA European Task Force (ISACA: Information Systems Audit and Control Association www.isaca.org) December in Paris to discuss IT usage development in companies – how to increase productivity and competitiveness by using ICT.

IT governance has become more and more important dealing with the IT best practices use. IT Governance best practices in companies improve efficiency in the companies. Therefore, IT Governance is an important factor for successful implementation of the Lisbon Agenda. Consequently, CECUA has been very active in this field.

Although ICT is becoming more and more used at the individual level nevertheless the ICT use improvement is low in companies. There is a key challenge for EU in the knowledge-based society, regarding the productivity and competitiveness of EU.

In addition CECUA 2006 activities have been continued and could be considered around organized around 5 main issues:

1. Involvement with the European Institutions and Communities:
European Parliament, European Commission, ENISA, ISACA European task Force, etc.
2. Involvement within the European Internet Community:
CECUA has continued its excellent relationship with all the Internet Communities, especially with the other organizations dealing with users or consumers concerns.
3. Involvement in Research programs As mentioned, CECUA Academy has published a set of papers regarding key user issues
4. Involvement in Innovation and Lisbon Agenda
This year, this involvement has been mainly through IT Governance in companies, especially by co-organizing a conference about this issue in mid 2006.
5. Involvement in Internet Governance through participation in conferences, working groups and discussion groups

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From CECUA Deputy Director, Media and Public Relations,
Friedrich Dittmer

CECUA's interests within the European Internet world and elsewhere have been promoted by the President and Vice-Presidents also during 2006 as all the years before. Especially by initializing the virtual CECUA Academy by a kick start and finding other places to verbalize and make known the above interests to a wider public. Additionally attention where generated by Friedrich Dittmer participating at the EU/RALO ALAC - Meeting on 25. October 2006 in Prague and chaired by Annette Muehlberg making CECUA and her main goals known to participants from Eastern and South eastern European Countries. The following days Friedrich Dittmer met with the ICANN-Studienkreis chaired by Professor Wolfgang Kleinwächter also in Prague. A large number of participants were from Eastern Europe and many of them were very especially interested in listening to explanations of CECUA's demands and user oriented interests which were up to then mostly unknown within their areas of activities. A few weeks later CECUA was part of activities to strengthen the influence of the German civil society towards the German government on issues concerning information technology, which succeeded in a greater number of invitations to IT oriented organizations by several German Ministries.

All these events have confirmed that many of CECUA's main goals of earlier years and still existing demands are world wide under implementation or nationally already in use. The further participation and especially with decision-makers like EIF should attach great importance to CECUA and what it stands for. To satisfy the needs of modern Media and Public Relations and be involved in actual debates CECUA has to accommodate her appearance by new forms of expressions by additional applications e.g. a web log which will be managed by Friedrich Dittmer.