



CECUA

Confederation of European Computer User Associations

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

Annual Report

for

2010

www.cecua.org

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CECUA Report for the year 2010

CECUA President's Message

Dear Colleagues,

Internet Governance: Government hands-on or hands-off?

Internet governance is still a big issue. Although the "What is internet Governance?" days are gone there are still many issues outstanding and new ones are popping up all the time. However, in general terms the discussion has brought the Internet down to earth, Internet does not offer an alternate world avoid of our present real world problems. Instead the Internet has become the home of social media for maintaining friendships and making new ones. The growth of social media has been astonishing. It has brought people from different corners of the world together. It has broken down physical borders and distances and given people the feeling of being citizens of the world. That is the upside. But there is also a downside. People have trusted the social media with personal information, something like they would trust to a personal diary. Only this new diary could be opened up to other people or sold to be used for other purposes. Once the information is stored on the net the person may find it difficult to erase or in spite of social medial companies assurances and promises it may pop up again at any moment. The treatment of personal information is different in different parts of the world. In Europe there are Data Protection laws to protect the rights of the individual to his or her personal information. In some other parts of the world information is just a commodity to be bought and sold dictated by the price.

In addition experience has shown that the social media networks can be hacked into and personal information burglarized. This downside is a big challenge for governments responsible for the safety and security of their citizens including personal information and law enforcement agencies responsible for apprehending the burglars. And this is not a local issue, not a country issue; it is a global issue which can only be solved at the global level.

It is too late for hands-off?

This brings up another Internet Governance issue, who is the boss? Initially the Internet was seen to be governed by ICANN or Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, a private organization in California in USA. Gradually it has seethed in and now it is even accepted by ICANN that its part of Internet Governance is merely technical administration. Who then does the rest of internet governance? Governments? For this purpose the ICANN set

up the so-called GAC committee, short for Government Advisory Committee to advice on Government issues. The relationship between ICANN and GAC has been strained to say the least. It seems that ICANN likes to dish out new domain names with naming conventions going across geographies and cultures and leaving it to the governments to solve legal issues such as governing laws and law enforcement. CECUA has long maintained that GAC should strive for more independency from ICANN. Here we run into a conflict between those who say Internet Governments hands-off and those, like CECUA, who favor Government hands-on. This question is even becoming more and more important as Internet reaches into every country on the globe and the lives of the people living in those countries. The Internet has been too successful for the hands-off approach. It was alright while it was an academic experiment and a toy to play with. Those days are long gone. Now the Internet is an invaluable for economic growth and prosperity. There is a need for a compromise allowing for private company initiative and governments role on behalf of its citizens. CECUA firmly believes this is the best option for the user and what he or she really wants and needs: **Safe and secure Internet technical environment and also safe and secure legal environment.** Some go further than that.

Almost four in five people around the world believe that access to the internet is a fundamental right, as a poll for the BBC World Service suggests. The poll covered more than 27,000 adults across 26 countries and found strong support for net access on both sides of the digital divide. In Japan, Mexico and Russia around three-quarters of respondents said they could not cope without it.

Countries such as Finland and Estonia have already ruled that access is a human right for their citizens. International bodies such as the UN are also pushing for universal net access. And Finland has gone even further. Finland has become the first country in the world to make broadband a legal right for every citizen. Every Finn will have the right to access to a 1Mbps (megabit per second) broadband connection. Finland has vowed to connect everyone to a 100Mbps connection by 2015.

And the politicians are finally jumping onboard and seeing the Internet in a broader light, not only as a toy but as a key element to boost economic growth and prosperity. Recent statement by the French president Nicolas Sarkozy as reported by Bloomberg:

"The Internet needs government involvement to reach its full potential of linking people and boosting economic growth. Now that the Internet is an integral part of most people's lives, it would be contradictory to exclude governments, Nobody should forget that these governments are the only legitimate representatives of the will of the people in our democracies. To forget this is to risk democratic chaos and hence anarchy." We can only wait for other national leaders including the EU to adopt a similar policy. One way to deal with the issue is to strengthen the GAC's role as mentioned earlier. However statements of this nature do not solve all Internet Governance problems. They need to be implemented not only at national level, even not at EU level but at global level. CECUA will be following this development and make its voice known wherever and whenever possible.

During the past year CECUA has also been active at the level of the European Internet Foundation, EIF. CECUA is a member of EIF and represented on EIF Board by CECUA Vice President Alain Moscovitz.

EIF has been focusing heavily on the how the digital world will develop and has prepared a draft Digital 2025 report. More on it later in this report.

EIF activity

Among the members of the EIF CECUA is the only user organization therefore taking on special role of a user/citizen/customer advocate. The CECUA High Level Expert group also commented on the draft Digital 2025 focusing on user/citizen/customer issues. CECUA urges all friends and colleagues to study the report and participate in the discussion. All views are welcome

On the EIF website web-site

<http://www.eifonline.org/en/articles/digital-world-in-2025/digital-world-in-2025.cfm> you find the report ready for downloading or viewing and also several short videos to introduce the report.

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 to take 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.



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From CECUA Vice President Alain Moscowitz

At the level of the European Internet Foundation, we could appreciate the evolution of Information Technology along 3 axes:

- Pervasive technology
- Economic
- Social and political

Whatever the axes, citizens and users are in the center of the approach. The concerns are to provide a better world to European People. 2025 vision is a key stone to think forward to a new European dimension space.

The current crisis is difficult for everybody but also could provide excellent opportunities for the European citizen if we succeed to create a digital secure world in light of the new emerging technologies (virtual reality, social network, cloud computing, big data, trust in IT including security and Trust)

In France, with many associations dealing with Information Technologies, we are looking for promoting this new world. It is time to talk over technologies. For example, we have organized during 14 weeks, more than 14 events about social networks. These events concerned many issues including (young, old, poor, unemployed, education, health, ..).

In France also, CIGREF, one of the most powerful CIO organizations has participated in the promotion of the digital economy. It has explained how far the digital world has transformed the economy, the public and private enterprises, the social live through a very interesting retrospective and examples coming from real and successful experiences

G9+ (www.g9plus.org), a confederation of 20 IT clubs of engineers and business Schools alumni has published 11 ideas how to promote information Technologies, including the usage of the Technologies.

Many other initiatives have concerned themselves with usage, trust and confidence in Information Technologies. CECUA has opened the road in 2004 by setting the conference **Identity, trust and confidence, security in the digital world**, just following the first UN summit.

Nevertheless a lot of work remains to be done and 2012 will be a key year in France with the President's election.

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From CECUA Deputy Director, Media and Public Relations

Friedrich Dittmer

The focus of CECUA's Media and Public relations activity in 2010 was on establishing contacts with the political parties represented in the German Parliament. This included finding out what interest they have in IT and how CECUA with its resources, ideas and problem solving solutions could contribute to that process.

-The Social Democratic Party (SPD) of Germany in 2006, then in the process of creating a government, proposed an EU-constitution for the Internet. In my contact with the party leadership in Berlin was to learn that this idea was completely deleted from the agenda of the present party leadership.

- The Free Democratic Party (FDP) of 2010 has been running public campaigns on the preservation of the fundamental rights of the citizen.
In my contact with the FDP, I have drawn attention to CECUA's existing draft Bill of Rights for the Internet as a good starting point only to discover that they were very ignorant about the subject and got no positive reaction.

- The Greens / Alternatives Party I've addressed directly through contact with their Ombudsman and suggested that CECUA's User Bill of Rights as the basis for securing civil rights on the Internet. An agreed meeting has not taken place yet.

In conclusion lots of work remains to be done to inform the political parties about the situation in Internet and how to secure the rights of the users.



CECUA is a non-profit user association registered in Brussels

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