



CECUA

Confederation of European Computer User Associations

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

Annual Report

for

2008

www.cecua.org

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CECUA Report for the year 2008

CECUA President's Message

Dear Colleagues,

2008 is the year of the global financial crisis in our memory. In the aftermath many things have changed. The customer is moving back into focus again. Even banks have started to remember the individual customer and cater to his or her needs. I hope other industries will follow suit. For all too long individual customers or users have been badly neglected. User Associations like CECUA, which the Commission had relied on for advice and supported earlier, moved to the sidelines. Their advice was not needed anymore because, in the view of the Commission, the market knew best about user needs and requirements. This really left only 2 stakeholders, industry and government. THE USER WAS OUT. The financial crisis may change the equation sporting the users again. Their involvement is crucial for reshaping the consumer market after the financial crisis. CECUA has proven by projects such as SCOFI¹ that by involving users from early on the time to market for new products and services can be shortened by years, minimum 1-2 years. European industries should take advantage of this and involve the users more. CECUA is ready to help.

Now is a good opportunity for user associations to raise their voice and be heard. This is what CECUA is doing and has been doing for the past quarter of a century. During this period of time many things have changed and CECUA has reinvented itself again and again to adjust to those changes. For the past ten years CECUA has been focusing very much on the Internet and in particular Internet Governance.

From being an interesting technology the Internet now occupies homes, offices, factories, governments and also the military. And Internet does not stop there. Internet is moving forward to mobile Internet including media, TV and Radio and not to forget Internet of things. To some people the Internet is some sort of a new world to live in, a virtual world free of all real world hassle, a refuge from daily problems and troubles. Contrary to their beliefs the virtual world of the Internet has inherited many of the hassles of the real world. A new generation of gangsters and mobsters has moved in on the Internet and its virtual world. And they are making more money on the virtual world Internet than their counterparts make on drug trafficking and prostitution in the real world. Recent study in Germany indicates that every second Internet user has been the target of fraud while using the Internet. Favorite targets are banking and Internet shopping. If by analogy there was a break in into every second home there would certainly be an outcry and politicians and authorities would be calling for more police resources. But Internet "break ins" have not caused such an outcry. Rather the burden has been put on the users by telling them to buy antivirus software and firewalls and change passwords often enough. CECUA has pointed out that other Internet stakeholders such as Internet Service Providers (ISP) and Internet hosts have to be included. Particularly now when the financial crisis limits funds available to invest in infrastructures and better user protection on the ISP and host side. Possibly time has come for more regulation of ISPs and hosts?

Few years ago I spoke at a seminar organized by one of the elite European universities. During the discussion I asked the audience who was responsible for Internet security. I got two
¹http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/sip/projects/completed/filtering_content_labelling/filtering/scofi/index_en.htm

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responses, one from a prominent lawyer and another one from a prominent professor. Both said the same that in their view Bill Gates and Steven Jobs were responsible for Internet security. Internet security was outside of the realm of law. This is interesting and shows at what level the Internet understanding and discussion was then. This was only 4 years ago.

What kind of response would I get if I asked the same question today? Most probably the responses would include national governments or something like that. At least Bill Gates and Steve Jobs would not be the only responsible ones.

Of course they carry a part of the responsibility supplying the world with Internet software which has proven to be less than secure to say the least. Internet security has been a key issue for CECUA maintaining that it is the responsibility of respective government to guarantee security for their citizens regardless if in so-called virtual or real world. For a long time ICANN, the technical administrator of the Internet caused confusion. People had problems distinguish between Internet technical administration including technical infrastructure security responsibility and law enforcement responsibility for crimes perpetrated against people and companies, something like ICANN safeguards the basement but who looks after the upper floors? It is not enough to keep the bandits out of the basement. People live on the upper floors. Somebody has to protect them. The question is who? Certainly not Bill Gates and Steve Jobs.

The awareness of this situation is growing, but unfortunately too slowly. On the upside the Government Advisory Committee, GAC, advising ICANN is gaining influence under the excellent leadership of Chairman Jānis Kārklīšs. A key issue has been to involve more and more countries of the world in the Internet Governance discussion, both developed and underdeveloped ones. Government is waking up and understanding firstly there is a problem with Internet criminality and secondly that they are responsible and have to act. On the downside it is not enough for parliaments to pass laws. Those laws have to be enforced and present day police is trained for real world police work, not to fight virtual world fraud and criminality. Human resources at home in the virtual world are needed for this kind of police work. This costs money and money is tight now during financial crisis.

There are also other complications. With all the social networking going on citizens/members of the networks are not limited to a single nation any more, social networks are multinational by their very nature. That means that the involved members/citizens are residents of many countries with different jurisdictions, jurisdictions with different laws and regulations. This means that in case of an alleged crime no single court alone can rule on it. The perpetrator most likely lives outside of jurisdictions where the crime was perpetrated. How can he be brought to justice? Internet crime/fraught jurisdiction is not national, it is global. Not USA or EU alone can address this issue. It has to be globally addressed. So really this is an UN issue? Governments are only slowly becoming aware of this. Some progress has been made but it is slow. However, it is a big step from Bill Gates and Steve Jobs to national governments responsible for Internet security. Another big step is needed from national governments to global responsibility. Really Internet security should be on the agenda of the G8 or G20 when they meet to discuss world problems. The issue needs to be escalated from national governments to regional government issue and from regional government to global issue. This is being a good opportunity for the EU to provide leadership. Something for the new EU parliament and EU commission to tackle. FOR THE LISBON TREATY TO BECOME REALITY INTERNET SECURITY IS A MUST. Identity, security, trust and confidence are all key issues to make the user of the Internet feel comfortable. Those issues are not new. In 2004 they were the subject of a conference in Paris where CECUA was one of the key organizers. On that occasion your president spoke about **Identity, trust and confidence, security in the digital world** and made references to the CECUA draft Bill of Rights. CECUA and its partners had concluded that the citizens needed a "safety net" to enable them to work and play safely in the Global Information Society and published a Bill of Rights for the Citizens of the Information Society as a starting point for the debate on Internet Governance to ensure that the Internet met the needs and the same legal and societal standards of all citizens, especially European citizens².

²http://cecu.customer.netspace.net.au/paris_colloquium.htm

The Bill of Rights is still valid and has been used to validate some Commission Directives from the user point of view.

But Internet security is a moving target, both use and misuse. Therefore, governments must not rest but all the time stay on the move. Recent figures indicate that there is more profit to be made by Internet fraud than by drug trafficking and prostitution. The fraudsters or gangsters have the financial resources to exploit the Internet and Governments have a hard time to keep up with them.

One of the problems is that the technologists push the development of the Internet for technology sake. They tell the user/customer that if you have this and that installed everything is OK. Governments are at the receiving end. They are reactive not proactive. They react only if something terrible happens. And it seems that only a major catastrophe close to home raises real awareness among the politicians like last year after alleged attacks on Estonian Public Internet sites and others by a foreign power. That brought some movement but not enough. Maybe we need another catastrophe to make them wake up to the full threats imposed by the Internet criminals. Maybe this time not Government target but military one with unforeseen consequences. Therefore, CECUA will continue to promote and articulate the need for Internet security locally, nationally, regionally and globally.

During 2008 CECUA continued active participation in the work to the European Internet Foundation or EIF through the excellent work by CECUA Vice President Mr. Alain Moscovitz. EIF has been working hard on preparing a perspective or vision for the future called Digital 2025. Among the members of the EIF CECUA is the only user organization therefore taking on the role of the user/customer advocate. The CECUA High Level Expert group commented on the draft Digital 2025 focusing on user/customer issues. Their comments were welcomed by the EIF making the Digital 2025 ready for the new Parliament and Commission.

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 opinions 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 2007 yearly report your Executive decided to set 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. Part of the Academy is the High Level Group of Experts with senior individuals with a wide range of experience from Industry and Government including the Commission. This group was instrumental in commenting on the Digital 2025 perspective/vision prepared by the European Internet Foundation (EIF).

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

The year 2008 was a very active year for CECUA involving the Vice President in his role and representing CECUA on several occasions:

CECUA has continued its strong involvement within European Internet Foundation (EIF). Alain Moscowitz, Vice-President of CECUA, is a member of the EIF board, and has attended most of the EIF board meetings.

A – Activities European Level

As in the previous years, CECUA has been very active within the European Internet Foundation (EIF). The 2008 main concerns have been:

- 1. EIF study trip to France**
- 2. Digital libraries and content, including content online initiative**
- 3. Cyber warfare and critical information infrastructure protection**
- 4. ICT and development: focus on EU-Africa**
- 5. Towards the digital world in 2025**

1. EIF study trip to France

A delegation of Members of the European Parliament traveled to Sophia Antipolis, a Science and Technology Park that is home to many high tech companies, as well as public research centers, associations and The European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI). This site visit included a rich program of round-table discussions and site visits.

The overarching theme was “the *food chain* research/standards/industrial-commercial deployment”, which was illustrated by concrete examples provided by different EIF member companies and organizations. CECUA has been involved in this trip promoting the user point of view

2. Digital libraries and content, including content online initiative

Digital libraries are contributing in giving access to the rapidly growing number of literary and scientific works online, and at the same time in making available Europe’s rich cultural heritage. From user point of view, these issues raised the right of access of a multicultural space.

The market for online creative content is emerging and developments are now taking place at a rapid pace. Building on a series of public consultations, the European Commission adopted in January 2008 a Communication on “Creative Content Online” which would launch further actions to support the development of innovative business models and the deployment of cross-border delivery of online creative content services (availability of creative content, multi-territory licensing, interoperability and transparency of Digital Rights Managements, legal offers and piracy). The Commission has also created a stakeholders' discussion and cooperation platform, the so-called "Content Online Platform", to initiate work on forthcoming challenges.

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From the user prospective, these issues are very complex and raise many opportunities and challenges surrounding the development of content online. There are many stakeholders and interests involved.

3. Cyber warfare and critical information infrastructure protection

The rapid growth of Information and Communication Technologies in both size and functionality, the so-called 'digital revolution' taking place since the 1970's, has lead communication networks and information systems to become the nervous system of our society and the economy. Though this development has brought about many opportunities, it did not take place without creating new challenges. The fact that the cyber world today more than ever plays a central role in an increasing array of governmental, industrial and social processes has greatly transformed the nature of security threats. Cyber warfare and the danger it presents to critical information infrastructures are important concerns. CECUA has raised these concerns since many years, and has promoted a safer ICT world on the user point of view.

4. ICT and development: focus on EU-Africa

From a user prospective point of view, CECUA has been one of the first organizations witch has promoted a European Border approach, taking into consideration that EU and the countries closed to EU have developed historical links as partners. The EU development has to be considered as an opportunity in stead of as a frontier (a wall) between EU and the rest of the world, especially the countries and users closed to EU.

Debate from different angles on the topical issue of ICT and development, with a special focus on Africa, is an opportunity to better understand the strategic value of ICT to unlock economic and social development, as well as to discuss how to harness its potential for tangible results.

5. Towards the digital world in 2025

CECUA has contributed to the report "Toward the digital world in 2025" – this report aims to prepare the new 2009 EU Parliament regarding ICT concerns, opportunities and challenges. The report has considered the trends following 3 points of view: technology, economic, political and social. The report will become available in 2009.

B – Activities in France

As in previous years, CECUA is very involved in the user point of view, especially within the G9+ and CIGREF arenas (www.g9plus.org www.cigref.fr)

The main subjects addressed in 2008 were the following:

- 1. Impact of the ICT technologies on people and organizations**
- 2. Founding of the research and companies development in ICT, including the financial crisis impact**
- 3. Innovation in ICT**
- 4. Open source economy, opportunities and challenges**
- 5. Business intelligence**
- 6. ICT and people diversities**
- 7. Process approach in ICT implementation in companies and organizations**
- 8. Green IT**
- 9. ICT in Morocco**
- 10. ICT in undeveloped countries**
- 11. ICT in Finance field, just after the financial crisis**
- 12. Offshore, risks, and opportunities**
- 13. e-business development**
- 14. ICT audit and security concerns in cooperation with AFAI, the French chapter of ISACA**
- 15. Internet governance**



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