

The 2011 Parliament and Internet Conference Thursday 13th October

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The Sixth Parliament and Internet Conference was held in Portcullis House on Thursday 13th October 2011. Building on from previous years, over 200 delegates attended and heard speeches from well-known figures in the communications sector. Delegates also participated in six breakout workshops to share and enhance their knowledge of specific issues.



The Parliament and Internet Conference provided an opportunity to discuss developments under the new coalition Government. Attendees were interested to discuss new policy initiatives like the Communications Bill and better understand its potential effects on industry.

Though the Chair of apComms, John Robertson MP, was unfortunately pulled away to undertake Parliamentary business, the Rt Hon Alun Michael MP graciously stepped in to welcome the delegates, introduce the agenda, and open the discussion.

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Detlef Eckert, Director of Policy Coordination and Strategy in the DG “Information Society and Media” of the European Commission



Detlef Eckert gave the first speech of the Conference, providing a European perspective on the impact of developments in the internet as well as an analysis of the key objectives of the European Digital Agenda.

Eckert explained that the internet had multiple roles. He believed that the internet will not only become a decisive factor in elections, but will also play a critical role in injecting growth to help support the European economic recovery. He felt that the full role of the internet had yet to be realised. The current disparity of views on regulatory issues created a series of challenges. He also believed that the internet was a global movement that will, in time, be dominated by Asia.

Eckert commented on some of the key aims of the European Digital Agenda and how these may be boosted by a recent €9.2 billion investment proposal by the EU Commission to improve internet access.

The funding would contribute towards one of the principal goals of the Digital Agenda: providing all households with broadband access at a speed of at least 30 megabits per second (Mbps), with at least 50% of households browsing the internet at a speed above 100 Mbps by 2020. The Commission’s view is that delivering high-speed internet also brings significant economic benefits in terms of fostering the ICT sector and creating a digital single market.

However, in order to meet these objectives, he felt the Digital Agenda must remove a series of barriers and encourage greater take-up of e-commerce by businesses within Europe.

Plenary Panel Session: “The Vision and Opportunities of the Internet: How can we use social media and innovation to drive growth and democracy?”

Panellists: Richard Allan, Facebook; Simon Hampton, Google; Dave Coplin, Director, Microsoft UK; Anthony Payne, RIM; Chair, Nigel Evans MP, Deputy Speaker of the House of Commons



The plenary session focused on the vision and opportunities of the internet. According to first speaker, Richard Allan, ‘this was a timely moment to be having the debate’. Allan stated the following 3 key aspects had helped the internet come of age:

First, improved physical infrastructure had made broadband accessibility at a reasonable speed possible for the vast majority of people in the UK. Second, the internet had become scalable at a user-friendly level, particularly following the explosion of cloud computing. Third, powerful web platforms with enhanced features had been made available at affordable rates, and with fewer technical barriers.

Richard Allan anticipated that the key regulatory challenges concerned data privacy, jurisdictional issues and the interaction of advertising/ content models.

Simon Hampton commented on the importance of the technology in job creation. Data was invaluable to business and where applied effectively, a business' productivity would have the potential to increase by 5-6%. Hampton highlighted the following 3 points: the importance of understanding data (and the need for people to be equipped with the correct skills in science and maths to be able to achieve this); the nature of intellectual property rights and data ownership following the Hargreaves Review; and the issues surrounding privacy and data protection, particularly in light of the Data Protection Review.

Dave Coplin expressed the view that technology was for both young and older generations. Social networking was a revolution. It had transformed the internet experience and played a significant role in the daily lives of citizens. The internet had changed the way we govern, allowed business to flourish and had the potential to orchestrate revolutions.

Anthony Payne considered the development of the mobile web. The development of community sharing of content and commerce created the potential for acceleration in mobile internet. It had been predicted that by 2013, there would be more mobile users of the internet than fixed-line users. Mobile commerce was in its infancy, but its importance was growing particularly for decisions on strategy, such as Trip Adviser and Amazon which provided the context to transactions.

James Brokenshire MP, Minister of State for Crime and Security

James Brokenshire delivered a fascinating speech on Parliament's increasing engagement with the online environment, reviewing the benefits and dangers of the web and Government's growing role in ensuring an effective system exists to address potential threats.

He referred to cyber security as a top-four threat to national security in the UK. The Government has allocated £650 million to national security and £63 million of this is set aside for combating cyber-crime.

Brokenshire provided a description of cyber-crime. It included pure online crimes, traditional offline crimes which have transferred in scale by the use of the internet, and quasi-forms of internet crime in which the internet acts a powerful tool to assist illegality, such as co-ordinating disorder.

The Government response to cyber-crime, highlighted in the cyber security strategy, can be broken down into 3 strands:

- 1) Reducing the vulnerability to all forms of online crime, through public awareness campaigns
- 2) Restricting online criminal activity, by adopting the right laws and enforcement
- 3) Promoting active national and international partnerships, to provide a collaborative response from Government, business and the public.



Brokenshire outlined the responsibilities which fell on businesses to ensure its services were secure and sensitive data protected, and the citizen who must take care to use appropriate security packages and be cautious about opening suspicious emails and downloads.

Initiatives such as 'Get Safer Online' were encouraging, and Government had been working on a single Government portal which would provide advice to both business and individuals.

In the final analysis, Brokenshire stated that the Government and industry must work in collaboration to ensure all the positive benefits of the internet are harnessed while ensuring the threats are dealt with firmly.

Nominet speech – Baroness Rennie Fritchie DBE, Nominet Chair & Lesley Cowley OBE, Nominet CEO



Cross-bench peer and Nominet Chair Baroness Rennie Fritchie led the Nominet session. She began by affirming the importance of the association of the Internet and Parliament; with the internet's prominent role in society and economic growth, it was particularly essential to engage in collective, informed policy debate and discussion. Baroness Fritchie then turned to the forthcoming Communications Bill and Nominet's focus on the public interest.

According to research, e-commerce sales reached £56 billion last year compared with £1.8 billion in 2001. Growth was predicted to reach £123 billion by 2020. Online advertising amounted to over £4 billion last year and the use of the internet had led to 10% growth in productivity for machinery. It had been estimated that 4 out of 5 Britons were using the internet by 2010. Baroness Fritchie stated that it was not about technology, but about humanity.

She suggested that Jeremy Hunt's open letter on the Communications Bill provided a useful opportunity for UK citizens to promote economic welfare and address potential problems, without over-regulating.

She outlined how Nominet were trying to make the Internet work effectively and to ensure it was a trusted space. She believed most companies had a good story to tell about keeping people safe online, and advocated the need for continued self-regulation. She believed this model had helped the industry adapt to innovation, shape best practice, and counter potential threats more quickly. She felt this approach in the UK had been key to its success in the Digital Economy.

Baroness Fritchie mentioned the continuation of the Nominet Internet Awards in 2011 to celebrate the achievements for individuals who have been making the Internet a safer and more inclusive place.

The Nominet CEO Lesley Cowley outlined Nominet's strong support for the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) and support of the multi-stakeholder model. She discussed Nominet's aims of strong commitment to speaking in the public interest; robust, secure and safe registry; good systems for protection and dispute resolution and Nominet's not for profit status where any surplus made is returned. She highlighted Nominet's approach to developing policy that underpinned the operation of .uk and the importance of finding the right solutions to address internet policy questions. UK bids should reflect the interests and needs of the consumers. She reiterated that the debate will continue and the principle of acting in the public interest will not diminish.

**A Question and Answer session with Ed Richards, CEO, OFCOM
Chair, Chi Onwurah MP, Shadow Minister for Business, Innovation and Skills**

Long-standing supporter of the Parliament and Internet Conference, Ed Richards, responded to questions from Chair Chi Onwurah MP.



Onwurah described OFCOM as possessing a dual role – rigorous regulator as well as champion of the internet industry. She opened the session by asking Ed Richards about internet regulation: How it was likely to evolve and whether new powers would be required.

Richards noted that since the introduction of the last Communications Act, the position favouring limited internet regulation had changed. While he said the earlier decision was the appropriate judgment at the time, he believed issues associated with networks, like net neutrality, might well require further regulation.

In response to a question about data and privacy, Richards believed this was a matter concerned with the public interest and rested on whether unregulated markets will deliver; failing that, the question becomes which types of regulation should be considered.

When queried how OFCOM would balance parliamentary interference against legitimate democratic accountability, Richards explained that in his experience of dealing with all three major political parties in Government, he had found Ministers consider the issues effectively. The risks arose when legislation or amendments were introduced without sufficient time to scrutinise their impact.

Ed Vaizey MP, Minister of State for Culture, Communications and Creative Industries



Ed Vaizey returned to the Parliament and Internet Conference for the third consecutive year to deliver an inspiring final keynote speech. He commented how useful an event the Parliament and Internet Conference was to enable Government Ministers to communicate with relevant stakeholders.

During his speech, he commented on a range of internet issues including the extensive consultation being undertaken with the Communications Review, progress with meeting broadband objectives, the importance of retaining the multi-stakeholder model of governance, and his support of open internet and matters associated with privacy, including the data protection directive.

Vaizey reinforced the Government's objective of achieving the best broadband in Europe by the end of this Parliament.

He commented on how he adopts a philosophical approach as the Internet develops. He emphasised his commitment to open internet, supporting self-regulation and government guidance rather than over regulation.

He welcomed the position of the Big 4 ISPs to develop a code of conduct in response to the Bailey Report. While not wishing to regulate, he maintained the view that the industry needed to be proactive in addressing parents' concerns associated with inappropriate content.

Finally, he informed delegates of the Government's intention to publish the Communications Green Paper early in the New Year focussing on the following 3 key themes:

1. Growth, Innovation, De-regulation
2. Providing the communications infrastructure to help broadband rollout and spectrum management
3. Providing the right environment for content industries to thrive

Workshop reports

The Internet Governance Forum – “Lessons from Nairobi, Plans for Baku” Joint Chairs: Rt Hon Alun Michael MP & Eric Joyce MP



The Internet Governance Forum (IGF) in Nairobi was a positive event with a very large and visible UK delegation. Ed Vaizey attended the Ministerial pre-event and the first day of the IGF conference: this was the first time a UK Minister had attended the

IGF, showing the strong UK support for the IGF and awareness of the importance of Internet governance.

Eric Joyce MP identified a major theme surrounding support for the self-regulatory, multi-stakeholder model, stating: “We should build on this to avoid seeing governmental control of the Internet”.

The Childnet youth delegation has made a huge impact, but increased international youth input across the sessions remains essential. Alun Michael argued for improved integration of parliamentarians in discussions with other stakeholders on the human and political issues associated with the Internet.

The group agreed that the IGF's profile needed to be improved, and that the article by Kate Russell (BBC Click, available [here](#)) and Lewis Fry's interviews posted on [YouTube](#) were good steps in the right direction

Looking ahead to the 2012 IGF in Azerbaijan, Eric Joyce stressed the need for ongoing work to identify UK priorities. Nominet flagged its scenarios work with SAMI, which will be used to develop more active engagement in the UK-IGF.

The MPs who attended the IGF meeting will contribute to developing the discussion with other UK stakeholders through the work of the UK-IGF.

EURIM – “Join the Networks – bringing the broadband and green agendas together”
Chair: Therese Coffey MP

1. There is enough funding available to build the best broadband in Europe by 2015 provided we make effective use of existing infrastructures and do not duplicate spend on the civil engineering elements of separate broadband and smart metering initiatives.
2. The obstacles to joining up are mainly regulatory and legal and to do with conflicting business interests and models rather than underlying technology barriers.
3. The more dynamic the market (with genuine competition between varied and evolving service offerings) the more important the need for “open” standards to enable inter-operability and choice.
4. The relevant standards have four layers:
 - Catalogues of physical assets (ducts, poles etc.): these appear simplest but are least well-developed and do not meet business needs. There is a trade off between the cost of accuracy and the benefits in operating and maintaining the networks
 - Network components: the standards for technical inter-operability are relatively mature and it may be that we already have all that is needed for the next decade
 - Operational standards (performance levels, latency, bandwidth, traffic management): these exist and need to be openly shared to make a reality of inter-operability
 - Business standards, covering the components of charging and service level agreements (e.g. resilience, reliability, quality of service), are also needed to enable genuine choice.
5. Those who wish to see a high-tech, investment-led, market-driven, economic recovery must, and are willing to, work together to remove the obstacles.
6. A fuller report can be found [here](#).



The Internet Telephony Services Providers’ Association (ITSPA) – “Convergence & Growth: Will anticompertitive behaviour stifle future networks and services?”

Chair: Dean Elwood, Founder/CEO of Voxygen & Founder of VoIP User



With the continued development of new Internet services, the ITSPA session discussed how traditionally separate networks and service providers would operate in an increasingly converged world. The panel brought together representatives from the fixed, mobile and VoIP sectors together to discuss these challenges. The prime focus of concern was surrounding anti-competitive behaviour and the longstanding regulatory issue of net neutrality. With the explosion in mobile data usage and with a third of British consumers using smartphones, the question was raised as to whether traditional separate network operators could survive in a more converged world, without prioritising their own services. Traffic management techniques were generally discussed but there was concern that without net neutrality, innovation and competition would fundamentally be damaged. The general feeling was that on fixed line Internet services, net neutrality was not a major concern. However VoIP providers were experiencing problems with the mobile operators and this was an issue that

needed to be closely watched, particularly with the future deployment of LTE (Long Term Evolution) – the next generation of mobile technology.

In terms of data usage, there was agreement that tiered data plans were a natural progression to deal with the recent explosion of consumer usage. There also needed to be effective infrastructure-sharing initiatives to help keep up with the demand, whilst providers would have to be flexible in providing their services over different platforms. These initiatives were beginning to take place and the panel discussed the recent O2 trial to use VoIP over their Wifi network as an interesting example.

There was a general consensus that despite potential hiccups along the road, the converged world would not be stifled by anti-competitive behaviour. There was agreement that Ofcom would have to play its part where necessary in order to appropriately enforce legislation on what was anti-competitive. In general, however, there was a belief that the industry would be forced to provide the services that consumers wanted. This would require some form of cooperation and flexibility by both network and service providers. With increasing demand and the rollout of next generation networks, in order to survive the industry would have to react to the demands of the consumer and ensure its business models keep pace.

PICTFOR – “The Internet Olympics”

Chair: Alun Cairns MP

In 2012 – more than ever – the Internet will be key to the dissemination of information both at home and abroad. Traditional broadcasting methods will be supplanted by high quality delivery to a variety of platforms unconnected to a fixed network.



Phil Feazey (General Manager: BBC News, Sport & 2012, BBC Future Media) described the coverage challenges, ranging from the 70-day torch relay through to the numerous event locations of the Games. Internet coverage in particular will allow access to over 20 simultaneous activities and give mobile and tablet/PC users the ability to interact, personalise and obtain unparalleled levels of detail for their favourite sports. This immersive

experience will allow all viewers to feel part of the Games whilst not being present and enable them to see all the action as it happens.

Mike Short, IET President and VP/O2, described how Twickenham Stadium has been used as a proving ground for mobile and WiFi coverage. This has allowed new techniques to be developed to balance send and receive calls. His company has employed 11 Olympic hopefuls on work experience projects as part of its legacy commitment.

The IET, in conjunction with the ICT Sector and UK Trade & Investment, is launching a technical journal entitled *ICT Delivering the Games*. This will be used to promote UK ICT throughout the world from November 2011 on, for not only forthcoming Olympic hosts but to any country holding a major event.

ISPA – “The opportunity the Internet brings to the creative industries”

Chair: Lord Toby Harris

The Internet Services Providers' Association (ISPA, www.ispa.org.uk) organised its session on the opportunities the internet offers to creative industries. The debate took place against the



legislative backdrop of the Digital Economy Act's focus on enforcement, and the Hargreaves Review's call for evidence-based policy and more innovative licensing in IP.

Speakers at the event were Billy Bragg of the Featured Artists Coalition, Paul Sanders from Media Service Provider, Oleg Fomenko from mflow and Jeff Lynn from the Coalition for the Digital Economy, with the lively proceedings chaired by Lord Toby Harris. Each panellist spoke on the theme of the benefits the internet can offer: Billy Bragg spoke of how it can empower artists and allow them to connect to fans easily; Paul Sanders revealed some of the challenges of launching a fully-licensed bundled service; Jeff Lynn, whilst acknowledging that technologically it was disruptive, said it offered innumerable benefits, citing the example of music service provider Pandora; and Oleg Fomenko identified the role of the internet in music discovery as one of the most important factors.

The speakers also discussed why the UK was struggling to be really innovative in this area, economic viability and the fact that the future will be shaped more by individuals than companies. The Q&A that followed echoed the panellists' view that whilst the internet posed challenges to the creative industries, it offered myriad benefits.

BSG – “Rolling out broadband to the final third: the challenges in getting there”

The BSG's session examined the practical issues involved in delivering improved connectivity to 'the final third', hearing from four panellists and discussing with the broader audience how to best deliver on the government's broadband ambitions.



Jon Freeman of Arqiva kicked off discussion stating that universality was the biggest prize on offer here; failing to get some basic and decent connectivity out to under-served areas risked exacerbating, rather than tackling, the digital divide. He warned against unrealistic hopes from procurements and urged for greater collaboration in business model development to take advantage of the mix of technologies required to reach all in the final third.

BT's Bill Murphy followed, underlining the role of the private sector in harnessing the public money available to really push out improved connectivity in hard to reach areas. He stated that now was the time to get cracking with action given the long gestation period of developing a broadband policy.

Andrew Wileman of Virgin Media highlighted that a key challenge for all players involved in this project would be stimulating demand for services. Without users previously having had broadband, it was important for marketing teams to clarify and engage customers on what the service makes possible.

Kate McGavin from DCMS (Department for Culture, Media and Sport) and Andy Carter from BDUK (Broadband Delivery UK) noted that Government appreciated the issues raised by the panellists and that work was underway to tackle them going forward. Kate informed that a report due later this year would relay some learning from the broadband pilot projects, and Andy noted that exchanging knowledge between different local authorities and local authorities with the private sector was a key BDUK priority.

The remainder of the discussion involved inputs from interesting attendees with a variety of perspectives. They highlighted important issues such as utilising the existing public infrastructure and encouraging local authorities to balance the affordability of network build with the ambition to maximise economic development and local growth using improved connectivity.
