

**The 2009 Parliament and Internet Conference  
Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> October**

The fourth Parliament and Internet Conference was held in Portcullis House on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> October 2009 and proved to be the biggest and most exciting yet.

200 delegates packed into the Attlee Suite of Portcullis House at 9.20am to hear John Robertson, Co-Chairman of the All-Party Parliamentary Communications Group, introduce the first keynote speech of the day from Ofcom CEO Ed Richards. The head of the communications regulator explained how he thought the traditional “creaking regulatory architecture” is straining under the weight of providing a basis for entirely new and fast moving technologies. He expressed the view that this will have to change as we move “from the broadcast era to the Internet age”.

Following morning workshops considering Britain’s Digital Recovery, the 2Mbs Universal Service Commitment and Digital Inclusion, the conference reconvened in plenary at 11am for an eagerly awaited speech by the Government’s Digital Inclusion Champion, Martha Lane Fox. She spoke with compelling eloquence, presenting research undertaken by PriceWaterhouseCoopers which indicates that 10.2 million adults (21% of the UK population) have never accessed the internet - including 4.0 million adults (9%) who are both digitally and socially excluded - and that households offline are missing out on savings of £560 per year from shopping and paying bills online.

Martha Lane Fox was followed by the Communications Minister, the Rt Hon Stephen Timms MP, who defended controversial Government plans to tackle illegal file-sharing. The Minister explained that he views illegal file-sharing as “stealing” and outlined the negative effect broadband has had on the music industry. The Minister also outlined the idea of a license fee for broadband users and made the comparison of this to the cost of a postage stamp. Mr Timms praised the progress of the private sector in delivering next generation services - specifically BT and Virgin Media - and pledged that 90 per cent of homes will have broadband by 2012.

Following lunch, Derek Wyatt MP - Co-Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Communications Group – announced the findings of the Group’s inquiry: ““Can we keep our hands off the net”. This inquiry looked into online privacy, the regulation of behavioural advertising, whether ISPs should be doing more to monitor “bad” traffic on their networks, and the way in which child sexual abuse websites are currently tackled.

The inquiry received 45 written submissions from consumers, consumer groups, the advertising, film and music industries, the telecoms and Internet industry, academics and lawyers. Three oral evidence sessions were organised at the House of Commons in July, when a cross selection of the respondents were invited to give evidence to apComms officers.

The inquiry’s key recommendations were as follows:

1. A recommendation for a Green Paper on Privacy, with a view to bringing forward a Privacy Bill in the next Parliament that sets out simply expressed, but far-reaching, protection for everyone’s privacy in both the offline and online worlds.
2. A recommendation to terminate the current policy-making process on what should be done about illegal file sharing and restarting it once the EU has finished negotiating the “Telecoms Package”. Future policy, the report clearly states, should not include the disconnection of end users, because this is not in the slightest bit consistent with policies that attempt to promote eGovernment.
3. Recommendations on behavioural advertising to ensure that it is only operated on an explicit, informed, opt-in basis. UKCCIS should consider further regulations to apply to behavioural advertising that is aimed at children and young people.

4. A recommendation that eSafety should be included in the core school curriculum, with appropriate topics being taught at Key Stages 1 to 4. Also, the Government should establish a national coordinating body to ensure that eSafety messages and teaching remain up-to-date.
5. A recommendation that network operators and retail outlets cooperate in providing point-of-sale literature on eSafety messages for mobile phones. The report also recommends that, for reasons of clarity, Ofcom should ensure that child protection filters are enabled by default for every type of mobile Internet access device, whether they be handsets or “dongles”.
6. A recommendation that the Government, in consultation with the EU Commission, establish whether the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) should extend its “notice and take-down” mechanisms to the whole world, and if not, work to establish such a global system.
7. A recommendation that the Government does not legislate to enforce the deployment of blocking systems based on the IWF lists. This has the potential to damage future attempts to fix problems through self-regulation, and will thus, in the long term, be counterproductive.
8. A recommendation that Ofcom keep the issue of “network neutrality” under review and include a section in each annual report that indicates whether there are any signs of change.
9. A recommendation that Ofcom regulate to require ISPs to advertise a minimum guaranteed speed for broadband connections.
10. A recommendation for a voluntary code for ISPs relating to the detection of, and effective dealing with, malware infected machines in the UK. If this voluntary approach fails to yield results in a timely manner, then Ofcom should unilaterally create and impose such a code on the UK ISP industry.
11. A recommendation that the law be revised, so that ISPs can take proactive steps to detect and remove inappropriate content from their services, without completely losing important legal immunities which fit with their third party role in hosting and distributing content.

Following an afternoon of further breakout sessions – which included a Youth and the Internet Governance Forum and workshops on Next Generation Broadband and VoIP Security - the conference closed with a drinks reception in Strangers Dining Room and a final address Nick Thorne, former UK Ambassador to the United Nations Institutions in Geneva.

Further information on the discussions held within a selection of the day’s workshop sessions can be found below:

#### **Britain's Road to Digital Recovery, organised by PITCOM (Parliamentary IT Committee)**

Tony Clayton, Chief Economist of the UK Intellectual Property Office, spoke first about the ways in which European statistical evidence measures the effects of ICT upon economic growth. The contributions of ICT are apparent at firm level, and even more clear at industry level, demonstrating the scale that investment has on productivity, with associated policy implications. Jonathan Liebenau and Patrik Karrberg of the London School of Economics, Department of Management, reported on the policy implications of their study of spending in three selected sub-sectors: broadband, transport and electricity grids. They emphasised the employment-boosting effects but also showed that other economic benefits accrue to carefully targeted investment that bolster or accelerate public policy goals for Digital Britain. The subsequent discussion focussed on the risks and innovation effects of spending, and on the

possibilities of applying the analysis to other sectors, localities and to address industry structure and trade issues.

### **Acting Locally, Acting Nationally, Acting Globally, organised by Nominet**

This session was Chaired by Martha Lane Fox, in conjunction with the Rt Hon Alun Michael MP. Additional key contributions were made by Rafiki, ACE- IT, Symantec, Business Crime Reduction Centre, Citizens Online UK , Beat Bullying, Internet Watch Foundation, British Library and the Serious Organised Crime Agency.

This workshop session considered the current thinking for the national agenda on digital inclusion, drawing on examples from local initiatives that have made a difference. It also identified some key messages to take to the UN Internet Governance Forum in November. Some “think pieces” had been posted in advance on the UK IGF blog: <http://blog.nominet.org.uk/ukigf/>.

- Barriers to inclusion are created through the price of the service, which prevents those from vulnerable backgrounds from getting connected.
- A lack of confidence and therefore motivation acts as a deterrent for gaining Internet access.
- We should look to provide advice and support in order to encourage online activity. There is a need for public service obligations to help people take the first steps towards inclusion.
- We need better engagement and for best practice to be shared across the board.
- There is a Cross-Party consensus on the importance of inclusion, as well as an acceptance that legislation is not the required outcome.
- Education is critical to engagement, and older people must also be targeted, as there are countless cases of elderly users discovering the benefits of inclusion.
- Improving security is key. If the partnership is not made to work, legislation will have to be expected.
- We need to universalise the message of inclusion, and to capitalise on the great energy and enthusiasm for learning that exists.

### **Youth and the Internet Governance Forum, organised by the Information Society Alliance (EURIM) and Childnet**

Childnet ran one of the workshops at P&I as part of the Youth IGF Project, bringing together young people, Parliamentarians and the Internet industry to discuss the experience of young people online, with specific reference to the themes of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) - openness, access, security and diversity.

The session was well attended with 15 youth delegates and a varied range of industry representatives including search providers, social networking services, the music industry and security experts. The discussion on the theme of openness revealed that young people are frustrated with being blocked online, mentioning over-zealous filtering in schools, and on a social level we heard a desire not to be judged on the websites that they visit.

During the discussion on access, delegates heard first hand from the youth representatives about different standards of access in the UK, and also heard that some young people are put off going online because of security fears and other potential threats such as cyberbullying. In thinking about security there was an acknowledgment that all users have a role to play in

ensuring their safety online and on the them of diversity, the young people at the session highlighted their wish for equality on the Internet, and acknowledged the important role that the internet plays in their lives – seeing at as necessity rather than a luxury.

The most striking message to come out of the session however was the contradiction between the desire expressed by young people for freedom and their belief that they have an automatic right to be safe - a real challenge to all those present. These discussions informed and helped shaped the structure of the subsequent youth panel held at the IGF, thereby contributing to the increasing call for the voice of youth to be heard from the main stage at the IGF 2010.

#### **The 2Mbs Universal Service Commitment, organised by the Internet Services Providers' Association (ISPA UK)**

The well-attended session was chaired by Derek Wyatt MP who was joined by two panellists, Andrew Heaney from Talk Talk and Andy Carter from the Department for Business, Innovation & Skills. Following the chair's introduction, the panellists delivered a short statement on their views on the commitment.

Following the statements, the session was opened up for debate and discussion amongst the audience. Questioning concentrated on whether the target was sufficient, how best it could be achieved, the impact of new bandwidth-heavy applications and the challenges rural users faced. Responding, the panellists agreed that the UK's competitive broadband market was a success but that the Government was right to address the small areas where users were unable to achieve broadband. The participants all agreed that action to encourage internet use was a good thing and the target should be reviewed to ensure that it remains effective.

#### **VoIP Security, organised by the Internet Telephony Services Providers' Association (ITSPA)**

The development of the Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) market, both in the business and residential sectors has gradually started to have some traction in the UK telecommunications market. Internet telephony providers are now offering services with more user friendly applications that have significantly higher levels of voice quality and reliability than before. With the role out of next generation networks, this trend is likely to continue as companies migrate their systems to IP.

For many years, the critics of Internet Telephony have long argued that it opens up the possibilities for numerous risks that are inherent with Internet based services. These problems can vary from Denial of Service attackers to Voice spamming (or SPIT); premium rate fraud to viruses. VoIP security stories are frequent in the technology press and the critics have long voiced their scepticism of developing VoIP networks as a replacement to the PSTN.

Equally the use of VoIP has a number of security concerns for the law enforcement agencies, in terms of serious organised crime and international terrorism. Tracing the location of VoIP calls is an issue which the industry and Government has been working on to find a viable solution.

Despite these potential problems however, businesses have been undeterred from investing in new networks, whilst in many instances residential customers use VoIP without even knowing.

So are there genuine problems in terms of security or has this emerging technology reached a point where proper precautions can ensure people's voice communications are safe?

This seminar therefore considered:

- 1) The security risks surrounding VoIP for residential and consumers and their potential impact.
- 2) The response by VoIP providers in minimising the risks.
- 3) The security concerns for the law enforcement agencies.
- 4) The solutions being discussed