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European ePractice Newsletter

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>> eProcurement Forum workshop

The eProcurement Forum is organising a workshop where participants are invited to present and share their experiences in using different tools for electronic public procurement developed taking into account the European legislation. Among other solutions, the European Commission's eProcurement Demonstrators and helpdesk will be presented. This free workshop is intended for civil servants from public administrations, software developers and any other eProcurement professionals. The event will take place in Vienna on January 14, 2009. For more information and registration, please visit eppractice.eu/workshop/eproc demos

>> How do you experience the impact of this website?

TNO Research Institute invites you to take part in a quick survey on the user experience and impact of ePractice.eu. Why did you join this community? How did the participation impact your work? This survey contributes to a study that helps policy makers and researchers to better understand the impact of such websites on the public domain (e.g. health, government and education). The survey only contains 10 questions and will take a few minutes. Click [here](#) to start.

Please feel free to forward eppractice.eu/newsletter to whom it may be of use. You are welcome to send suggestions that may help us to improve the portal and enrich its content. We invite you to [become a member](#) of ePractice.eu in order to use all our services.

Latest Cases

- [Action Potential & Epilepsy](#) 5 December 2008 |
- [Network for Innovative development of the Mazovia Region](#) 4 December 2008 |

- [Consilium Tendering](#) 2 December 2008 |

Editor's Choice of the week: [ECDL for kids suffering cancer](#)

Action Potential & Epilepsy

The "Action Potential & Epilepsy" film was produced during early 2008 by Take the Wind in a co-production with the Portuguese Society for Neuroscience. It follows the homonymous chapter of the public education booklet about the brain published in open source format by The International Brain Research Organization. It has an educational character and high scientific content, and no commercial purposes were considered. Action Potential is an experimental approach that allowed Take The Wind and The Portuguese Science for the Neurosciences to test how the most recent ICT can help visualize and communicate scientific and medical data, either for professionals, students or general public.

Network for Innovative development of the Mazovia Region

SIRMA - Network for eGovernment and Innovative development of the Mazovia Region, constitutes an inspiring answer on challenges that concern innovative harnessing ICT. SIRMA supports social and economical goals of regional authorities that have initiated and then supported SIRMA. The project is focused on the delivery mechanisms for promoting and increasing public services in Mazovia Region. Knowledge transfer is enhanced through a ICT system assuring an effective environment for the following actions: trainings for inhabitants focused i.e. on benefits of targeted, combined and accessible multichannel services; workshops for civil servants and public institutions that may synergize the service delivery process; providing best practice learning opportunities for socially excluded, and facilitating coordination among stakeholders engaged in service delivery at regional/local level. The high quality of the project activities was guaranteed by the experts of the known Polish and European specialists.

Consilium Tendering

Consilium Tendering, the tendering platform of the Council of the European Union was launched in May 2008. The scope of the project is complete operationalisation of electronic tendering in the Council, which includes beside the development of the platform also its accreditation regarding compliance with the security and legal requirements, setting-up user support, adaptation of relevant internal procedures, and training of end users. The platform is being developed and implemented in two phases. First phase, implemented in May 2008 covers the following features: •Registration of economic operators; •Subscription of economic operators to notifications on new Calls and automatic reminders on deadlines; •Publication of tendering documents by the contracting authority, •Questions submitted by economic operators, private and public answers by the contracting authority; •Messages sent by the contracting authority to economic operators (requests for additional information and clarifications, award notifications). Second phase (to be launched in first half of 2009) covers: •Submission of tenders and requests to participate by economic operators •Response to requests for additional information and clarifications by economic operators •Evaluation of tenders and requests to participate by contracting authority. At present, the interface is available in English and French, while most of supporting information is available also in other EU languages. It is envisaged to extend the interface to other EU languages in the 2009 release. The following procedures are supported by the system: •Open procedure •Restricted procedure •Negotiated procedure - below and above thresholds •Call for expressions of interest •Competitive dialogue •Framework agreement - reopening of competition Dynamic Purchasing System and eAuctions are not supported, as the contracting authority does not reach the critical mass in appropriate spend volume to justify the investment.

Latest News

- [EU: Cyber patrols and Internet investigation teams to reinforce the EU strategy against cyber crime](#) 9 December 2008 | EU Institutions
- [PT/PL: Spatial Data Infrastructure debated in Lisbon](#) 9 December 2008 | EU Institutions, Poland, Portugal
- [EU: Try out online the eProcurement learning demonstrators!](#) 8 December 2008 | EU Institutions
- [UK: "OneMann": nominated for the UK's eGovernment National Awards](#) 8 December 2008 | United Kingdom

- [BE: Aid for the Promotion of Employment in Wallonia – New, simplified eForms](#) 5 December 2008 | Belgium
 - [SE: Joint municipalities studying Open Source options](#) 5 December 2008 | Sweden
 - [HU: Tax Administration website renewed](#) 5 December 2008 | Hungary
 - [BG: eConsultation on the domain “.eu” in Cyrillic](#) 4 December 2008 | Bulgaria
 - [HU: Electronic registration of companies proving successful](#) 4 December 2008 | Hungary
 - [HU: Official forms being standardised](#) 4 December 2008 | Hungary
 - [LI: Liechtenstein to join European Council’s Convention on Cybercrime](#) 3 December 2008 | Liechtenstein
 - [FR: Accidents at work – Employer’s declaration online](#) 3 December 2008 | France
 - [EU: ICT Call 4 open until 1 April 2009](#) 3 December 2008 | EU Institutions
 - [EU: Action Plan on e-signatures and e-identification adopted](#) 3 December 2008 | EU Institutions
 - [EU: Broadband: Gap between best and worst performing countries in Europe narrowing](#) 2 December 2008 | EU Institutions
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EU: Cyber patrols and Internet investigation teams to reinforce the EU strategy against cyber crime - 9 December 2008

The Council of Ministers of the European Union recently adopted a strategy in order to reinforce the fight against cyber crime with a series of operational measures, i.e. cyber patrols, joint investigation teams and remote searches, which will be applied within the next five years. The strategy also introduces concrete steps for closer cooperation and information exchange between law enforcement authorities and the private sector.

The new strategy, a product of close collaboration of the European Commission and the Member States, has as its principal idea the reinforcement of the partnership between the police and the private sector. The key to this idea would be the knowledge-sharing on investigation methods and trends in cyber crime, encouraging both parties to respond quickly to information requests, organize remote searches as well as cyber patrols for online tracking of criminals and joint investigations across borders.

An alert platform will also be set up in the near future hosting reports on crime committed on the Internet, such as posting of illegal content, within the European Union in straight collaboration and cross-checking by Europol. The platform, a project necessary for the success of the strategy in question, will receive the financing of the European Commission with an amount reaching

300 000 Euro and will be implemented by Europol.

Jacques Barrot, the Vice-President of the European Commission and European Commissioner for Justice, Freedom and Security, highlighted the importance of this strategy by saying:

"The strategy encourages the much needed operational cooperation and information exchange between the Member States. It gives a shared responsibility to the Commission, the Member States and other stakeholders to introduce the different measures. If the strategy is to make the fight against cyber crime more efficient, all stakeholders have to be fully committed to its implementation. We are ready to support them, also financially, in their efforts."

Further information:

- [Original Europa RAPID press release](#)
 - [Website of Vice-President Jacques Barrot](#)
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PT/PL: Spatial Data Infrastructure debated in Lisbon - 9 December 2008

The event on “Infrastructure for Spatial Data” organised by the iGOV project in Lisbon on 27 November 2008, has been the occasion to discuss on the Portuguese Geo-Information System (SNIG) while exchanging on related infrastructure projects in the context of the INSPIRE Directive.

"It is a moral responsibility for those who produce the data to disclose them", stressed Rui Pedro Julião, Vice-President of the Portuguese Geographic Institute (IPG). Referring to the Portuguese Geo-Information System ([Sistema Nacional de Informação Geográfica – SNIG](#)), he commented that SNIG “has been a pioneer project which influenced others, either in Portugal and abroad, thus setting a textbook example at geographic information level.”

Rui Pedro Julião presented the Metadata Editor (MIG) tool of SNIG. MIG enables the creation and publication of metadata, allowing the data producers to document and to publish them on the portal. “Three years ago, the number of data sheets was almost inexistent. Now they are over 10 000 of them” he said.

The Vice-President of IPG explained that SNIG furthermore features a catalogue of geographical information, tools to visualise it, applications such as the Metadata Editor, online maps and a forum designed for the site’s geo-community.

Creating a European infrastructure for spatial information to assist policy making and management at both national and pan-European levels has been the main objective that led to the creation of the European Directive [INSPIRE](#) (Infrastructure for Spatial Information in Europe) explained Alexandra Fonseca , Researcher at the Portuguese Geographic Institute (IGP).

In force since 2007, the Directive is intended to defragment the data set and sources of geographic information and address the gaps in terms of their availability, facilitating access to harmonized data, providing greater support to the activities aimed at the implementation of environmental policies, integrating them best with other policies and encouraging public participation.

According to Ms. Fonseca, the full implementation of the directive, scheduled for 2019, "does not mean the stagnation of its activities, as it may have happened by then that there are components that are already outdated, and in such cases we must work towards improving these."

Moreover, a panel dedicated to the presentation of major infrastructure projects took place during the event. It focused on the following projects:

- The experience of Poland with <http://www.geoportal.gov.pl/>, a central database which constitutes a national database of geographical information, featuring a list of service providers that those interested can use as a source of information. "The interoperability and integration between systems, Governments and agencies affect all industries and solutions," said Robert Widz, the Polish representative of a provider of geospatially powered solutions. “Both are achieved through the adoption of common standards, technologies and architectures for interoperability.” he added.
- At national level, the ‘Portuguese Territorial Information System’ (SNIT), introduced by Regina Pimenta, the General-Director of the Directorate General of Planning and Urban Development (DGODTU). SNIT pursues the objectives of ensuring the rights of information and access to instruments of territorial management, being a collaborative system shared by an online network of authorities responsible for territorial management and supporting the processes and working methods of the DGODTU.
- At regional level, the ambition to create a portal bringing together all the geographic information of the Autonomous Region of Madeira. The initiative will include the existing three sub-projects in the region – the Regional Network of Geographic Information (RRIG), the GIS (Geographic Information System) and the Local and Regional Land Information System – and should contribute to "maximizing the potential of ICT in the dissemination of Geographical Information (GI) at the service of economic and social development" while “encouraging the use of massive GI and contributing to the modernisation of the Regional Administration,” revealed Maria João Neves, Head of the Regional Geographic Information and Spatial Planning, Regional Secretariat for Social Equipment of the Autonomous Region of Madeira.

Further information:

- [Source article – Press release of the iGOV project \(in Portuguese\)](#)
- [SNIG website \(in Portuguese\)](#)
- [Website of the INSPIRE Directive](#)
- [Website of geoportal.gov.pl](#)

EU: Try out online the eProcurement learning demonstrators! - 8 December 2008

As of 8 December 2008, the updated version of the eProcurement learning demonstrators is available [online](#). Get the look and feel of how an electronic public procurement system could look like.

The eProcurement learning demonstrators simulate functional requirements for public procurement systems based on the Public Procurement Directives. The demonstrators were developed in Open Source and are [freely available](#) under the [European Union Public Licence](#).

The eProcurement learning demonstrators were developed in 2004 and went through an update this autumn. This update included customization of the GUI, updating the list of CPV codes and creation of two installation packages of the application. The main functionalities covered are:

- Individual contracts under open and restricted procedures;
- Repetitive contracts using framework agreements and dynamic purchasing systems;
- Electronic auctions.

The following versions of the eProcurement learning demonstrators are now available:

- [Online version](#): no need to download or install, just try it!
- [Dynamic version](#): installation package of the software application supporting two database options – **HSQldb** which can run as a standalone application and **MySQL** which requires installation of the MySQL database on the computer;
- [Static version](#): web pages with fixed scenarios in the form of screenshots. This version has no installation requirements and can be used as teaching material.

To provide users with help and assistance in using the eProcurement learning demonstrators, a [free online helpdesk](#) has been created.

A free copy of the CD with the dynamic and static versions can be requested at jdabc@ec.europa.eu. The members of the eProcurement Forum will receive a copy without requesting it.

Further information:

- [eProcurement helpdesk](#)
- [eProcurement demonstrators case](#)

UK: “OneMann”: nominated for the UK’s eGovernment National Awards - 8 December 2008

The [Treasury Information Systems Division](#) of the Isle of Man Government announces the nomination of the Government Online Services Programme, “OneMann” - shortlisted in the “Central e-Government Excellence for Team Working” category - as a finalist in the UK’s [eGovernment National Awards](#).

These awards are offered to the most effective Government services that aim to improve citizen and business transactions with councils, central government departments and other public sector organisations.

Allan Paterson, Director of Treasury Information Systems Division commented: “Our shortlist as a finalist for these prestigious awards is further recognition for the Online Services Programme Team which, in just 2 years, has built a truly “shared” set of online services. These services will progressively enable a wide range of infrastructure and business services that are transforming Government interactions with citizens and businesses and it is the effective team working with ISD, its supplier partners, and Government Departments, Boards and Offices that makes this Programme a success.”

The awards ceremony will take place on 20 January 2009 at a dinner in the City of London where the winners will receive their awards by Minister Tom Watson MP and Government CIO John Suffolk.

Further information:

- [Official press release - UK: Isle of Man Government Online Services Project named finalist in UK e-Government National Awards](#)
- [eGovernment National Awards 2008](#)
- [Information Systems Division, Isle of Man Government](#)

BE: Aid for the Promotion of Employment in Wallonia – New, simplified eForms - 5 December 2008

Besides the existing eForm for requesting an Aid for the Promotion of Employment (APE – Aides à la Promotion de l' Emploi) of youngsters, employers in the Belgian region of Wallonia have been enabled to electronically sign and send to the appropriate authority three more forms, via a single click.

The eForms in question are the following:

- [Aid for the Promotion of Employment - Commercial sector](#)
- [Aid for the Promotion of Employment - Non-profit sector](#)
- [Aid for the Promotion of Employment - Public Authorities](#)

They are available on the website formulaires.wallonie.be and they give the possibility to businesses, operators of non-commercial or public authorities (which are the main targets) to fully file an application by electronic means, through the website. The digitized forms can be signed with a Belgian eID card.

Moreover, this technical advancement has been applied in order to simplify the content of forms, which are now considerably simpler and shorter.

Supported by the Directorate General for Economy and Employment (DGEE) - Division of Employment and Vocational Training, this site provides access to all forms of the Wallonia Region, including the intelligent forms that offer assistance for the person filling them out, in the form of pop-up hints. These documents are mainly available in Word and PDF files. The site's structure follows the life events of citizens and businesses. It is also organised by themes and can be searched through the dedicated search engine.

The APE consists in the granting, in the form of points, of an annual aid in order to partially subsidize the remuneration of workers, a significant reduction of the employers' social security contributions (except for the commercial sector), and the automatic indexation of the amount of the subsidy based on the consumer price index.

Further information:

- [Original press release – Commissariat EASI-WAL](#) (in French)
- [Website of the forms of the Region of Wallonia](#) (in French)
- [eForm – APE for the commercial sector](#) (in French)
- [eForm – APE for the non-profit sector](#) (in French)
- [eForm – APE for the Public Authorities](#) (in French)

SE: Joint municipalities studying Open Source options - 5 December 2008

The about eighty members of Sambruk, a Swedish association of municipalities jointly developing electronic services, are debating if and how to use Open Source for their IT projects. The group started a research and development project to garner support for Open Source in the public sector.

Claes-Olof Olsson, Sambruk's managing director and Anna Öhrwall Rönnbäck, Industrial Economics and Management researcher at Linköping University presented on Sambruk's Open Source initiatives during a conference organised by the Open Source Software Observatory and Repository (OSOR.EU) on 14 November 2008.

The Sambruk association was formed in 2003 to jointly develop specifications for public administrations' electronic applications and to prevent vendor lock-in. "We want to be pragmatic and not dogmatic users of Open Source", Olsson said.

The association has so far developed two applications that are based on Open Source. One is a module used for electronic data exchange between Government agencies and municipalities, the other is an eService application aiding recruitment. And according to Rönnbäck, some of the members are using several other Open Source applications.

"We are in a transition from supplier-controlled to customer-driven software development and procurement. We need to change our dialogue and relationship with IT suppliers", the two explained during the OSOR conference. Some of the challenges the group is facing are that the software and IT services providers are organised in monolithic silos, which fosters self-serving business models. Complex administrative processes in Sweden's municipalities are another hindrance, Olsson adds. "Municipalities nor the IT vendors possess sufficient competence to analyse and re-invent this business process."

Roadmap

The Sambruk members are about to create an alternative, mixing Open Source and proprietary models, called 'community source'. Members will, for a limited period, get free access to applications during which the software can be changed and improved. The group hopes this will ensure development responsibility and a clear development roadmap.

The group is now discussing whether the communities retain ownership of the improvements they make to the applications or what kind of IT services they are willing to be charged for.

"It is too early to share information about the community source", says Öhrwall Rönnbäck. "It is still being discussed on the Sambruk Research & Development forum and is still up for discussion at the Sambruk Board."

During the conference, Olsson and Öhrwall Rönnbäck announced the start of a research to practically develop support for the use of Open Source in the Swedish public sector. The research, titled "Bossanova" (Business models for Open Source Software in the Public Sector: New opportunities for customers and suppliers) will run for three years.

Öhrwall Rönnbäck: "Among the results we expect are business models and methods for IT suppliers to procure, develop, administer and service Open Source Software for public electronic services."

Further information:

- [Original press release on the OSOR.EU website](#)
- [Sambruk's presentation](#)
- [OSOR.EU – Municipalities Community](#)
- [More about "Bossanova"](#)

HU: Tax Administration website renewed - 5 December 2008

The website of the Hungarian Tax and Financial Control Administration (APEH) has been updated. It offers new, personalised services to the tax payers.

The website's new features allow its users to file their tax returns more easily. For instance, new 'personal tax calendars' are generated by the system. Those who make use of their personal tax calendar through the Client Gate and as registered users will receive warning emails prior to the various tax deadlines.

In addition, through the personalised tax calendar service, the tax payer receives the list of forms and the submission and payment deadlines relevant for him according to the replies he/she has given to the questions formulated by the Administration.

The software has been elaborated over several months and tested by tax experts and consultants. It is thus the result of a wider professional agreement.

More generally, the new homepage of the APEH has been reviewed in terms of content and design. Besides the homepage's more user-friendly display, a FAQs section has been given priority.

Further information:

- [Original news article – Hungary's eGovernment Portal 'Magyarország.hu' \(in Hungarian\)](#)
- [Website of the Hungarian Tax and Financial Control Administration \(in Hungarian\)](#)

BG: eConsultation on the domain “.eu” in Cyrillic - 4 December 2008

The Bulgarian State Agency for Information Technology and Communications (DAITS) has recently launched on its website an [online poll](#) regarding a “.eu” Internet domain in Cyrillic. The consultation is scheduled to close on 31 December 2008.

The survey aims at exploring whether Bulgarians citizens and companies wish the “.eu” domain to be able in Cyrillic alphabet. In addition, anyone is invited to suggest a “.eu” domain which should consist of two letters, with at least one of the two being in Cyrillic.

The answers to the online poll will be used to draft a Bulgarian opinion to the European Commission, as the latter is the only entity which can present the Bulgarian position regarding the “.eu” domain to the Internet Corporation for Names and Addresses (ICANN).

In June 2008, Bulgaria became the first country to request with ICANN the registration of a national Internet domain in Cyrillic.

Further information:

- [Official press release – State Agency for Information Technology and Communications \(DAITS\) – in Bulgarian](#)
- [Cyrillic domain online poll – DAITS website – in Bulgarian](#)

HU: Electronic registration of companies proving successful - 4 December 2008

In Hungary, the “one-hour” company registration electronic system – whose use has been compulsory since July 2008 – has passed the test. With its previous minor dysfunctions been dealt with, the system’s current operation is fulfilling the initial expectations.

One of the major, most followed, eGovernment developments in Hungary in 2008 has been the electronic registration of companies which became obligatory on 1 July 2008.

The new scheme has brought about considerable changes for both the judges of the Courts of Registration and the lawyers. Regarding the judges, the task of actually registering the company has been replaced by that of legally supervising the registration process. On their side, lawyers are faced with entirely new methods which notably require the use of electronic signature.

The eRegistration procedure starts when the application form for registration and the related documents are filled in and submitted to the supplier electronically – in XML format only. Once the document has arrived at the Court of Registration, it is then electronically checked. If the document is valid following this check, the registration with the statistical and the tax authorities takes place.

Due to the initial problems – mainly pertaining to technical aspects or background procedures –encountered during its first days of operation, the system has been continuously corrected, thus operating increasingly smoothly.

In the first three months of operation, 28 000 “one-hour” registrations were submitted to the Court of Registration. In parallel, the rate of automatically dismissed requests dropped from 40 % to a lower percentage.

Further information:

- [News article – vg.hu \(in Hungarian\)](#)
- [News article – mfor.hu \(in Hungarian\)](#)

HU: Official forms being standardised - 4 December 2008

Currently, over a thousand types of forms are used in the Hungarian Public Administration within the framework of eGovernment services applications and for the management of civic affairs. According to a decision from the Government, the forms will have been brought to a standardised electronic format by March 2009.

In the first part of 2008, the ministries compiled and listed the forms they had been using until that time period. It turned out that these forms are not standardised as the various institutions had created them according to their respective needs.

Mr. Ferenc Baja, the Government Commissioner in charge of eGovernment affairs said that this diversity constitutes a burden for citizens, and must therefore be put to an end.

The diversity of the forms implies the use of various types of background databases by the public institutions, thus increasing the potential risk of errors. Following the Government’s decision, the standardisation of the forms will take place using a specific standard and software system. Moreover, the future form submission system will be based on the updated version of the solution which is currently applied in electronic tax returns.

In addition, as from March 2009, all these forms will be made available both on the ministries' homepages and on the eGovernment portal (<http://www.magyarorszag.hu/>). The forms which will have not been included in the central system will be forbidden to be used by the institutions, and citizens will not be obliged to fill them out.

urther information:

- [Press release – Hungary's eGovernment Portal 'Magyarország.hu' \(in Hungarian\)](#)

LI: Liechtenstein to join European Council's Convention on Cybercrime - 3 December 2008

Liechtenstein has decided to join the European Council's [Convention on Cybercrime](#) and is currently revising its legislation to align it with the provisions of this agreement.

The progress in the field of Information Technology offers a wide range of new possibilities. On the other hand, exploitation of these technologies for purposes of abuse has also become a reality: a new form of crime has evolved worldwide, the Cybercrime. A broad spectrum of criminal actors are attracted by the new possibilities offered by the Internet; namely, terrorist groups, pornographic networks, drug and arms dealers, as well as credit card fraudsters and money laundering networks.

In order to address this international problem, the Council of Europe created the Convention on Cybercrime, which came into force in 2004. This treaty aims to combat crimes relating to modern information technologies and seeks to harmonise national laws in this area. Furthermore, in conjunction with an additional protocol, this convention forms a legal instrument to combat terrorism, extending its scope to crimes with racist and xenophobic background. It is so far the only international treaty against Cybercrime. Accession to this Convention is also open to countries that do not belong to the Council of Europe.

Liechtenstein has decided to join the convention of the Council of Europe and is therefore currently revising its legislation to bring it inline with the provisions of this agreement. Thereby, Liechtenstein focuses on penal code legislation concerning Cybercrime-related offences, such as copyright violations, computer fraud, child pornography and security violations of electronic networks. Elements of offences contained in the convention will also be included in the Liechtenstein penal code. Contrary to this, there is no particular need for action related to the implementation of the additional protocol: provisions related to the fight against terrorism and racism are already met by the existing legislation.

The Government considers accession to the Convention on Cybercrime as necessary in order to prevent actions against the confidentiality and availability of computer systems, data and networks.

Further information:

- [National Administration Portal of Liechtenstein – Press release \(in German\)](#)
- [Convention on Cybercrime](#)

FR: Accidents at work – Employer's declaration online - 3 December 2008

Since 1 September 2008, employers have been able to directly perform the declaration of accident at work (DAT) online.

In France, the employer or his/her representative must direct this declaration to the relevant 'Primary Health Insurance Fund' (*Caisse Primaire d'Assurance Maladie – CPAM*) within 48 hours following the report of an employee's work accident, or of any accident that has occurred on his/her way to work.

The new online declaration service allows companies to fill out the two necessary forms simultaneously:

- The declaration of accident at work;
- The 'accident sheet' which allows the employee to benefit from free healthcare subsequent to the accident.

This service ensures a secure exchange with two levels of acknowledgement of receipt: the notification of submission and the acknowledgement of receipt itself issued by the Primary Health Insurance Fund. Furthermore, there is a possibility for the employer to add all the information he/she wishes to communicate to the Fund or to attach complementary documentation. This way, ulterior exchanges of information are prevented, thus enabling a quality and swift declaration process.

In order to benefit from this service, the employer only needs to be registered with the <http://www.net-entreprises.fr/>. Registration is free of charge.

In addition, in case an employee is forced to leave because of a work accident, certain employers – whose employees are subject to the general health insurance plan (*régime général de l'Assurance Maladie*) – can then complete online their employee's [salary certificate](#) (*attestation de salaire*) which will enable the employee to receive the payment of his/her daily compensation.

Lastly, the employers or their representatives can furthermore check [online](#) the contribution rates applicable to their organisation regarding work accidents or occupational diseases.

Further information:

- [Press release – PME.service-public.fr \(in French\)](#)
- [The DAT declaration online service – Net-Entreprises website \(in French\)](#)

EU: ICT Call 4 open until 1 April 2009 - 3 December 2008

The fourth call under the EU's 7th Research Framework Programme (FP7) ICT Theme is open.

The ICT Theme focuses on seven strategic Challenges for the seven years of FP7. These Challenges are as follows:

- Challenge 1: Pervasive and trustworthy network and service infrastructures;
- Challenge 2: Cognitive systems, interaction, robotics;
- Challenge 3: Components, systems, engineering;
- Challenge 5: Towards sustainable and personalised healthcare;
- Challenge 6: ICT for mobility, environmental stability and energy efficiency;
- Challenge 7: ICT for independent living, inclusion and governance.

The ICT Call 4 seeks proposals in 19 areas which are part of the above Challenges.

Furthermore, the ICT Call 4 promotes research in three new areas of 'Future and Emerging Technologies', namely:

- Concurrent tera-device computing;
- Quantum information foundations and technologies;
- Biochemistry-based information technology.

Lastly, the Call includes a number of Coordination and Support actions, with particular emphasis on international cooperation in ICT with partner countries overseas.

The ICT theme has committed a budget of €801 million for this Call. The closing date for proposals is 1 April 2009, at 5 pm CET. It is expected that the first projects funded from this action will be launched in the late autumn of 2009.

Further information:

- [Original press release – Europe's Information Society Thematic Portal](#)
- [Full call details on the CORDIS](#)

EU: Action Plan on e-signatures and e-identification adopted - 3 December 2008

The European Commission has adopted an Action Plan on e-signatures and e-identification to facilitate the provision of cross-border public services in the Single Market.

In the framework of the 'Lisbon Strategy for Growth and Jobs', the EU has committed itself to improving the legal and administrative environment with the aim of unlocking business potential. Bringing public administrations online and enabling the cross-border communication of enterprises and individuals with them, favours entrepreneurship and facilitates the citizen's contact with public authorities.

Major barriers to cross-border access to the electronic public services are linked to the use of electronic identification and signatures. Since the implementation of electronic identification in each Member State has been focusing very much on national needs and means, the main barrier for an electronic identification is the lack of interoperability, either legal, technical or organizational. This approach creates new 'e-barriers' to cross-border markets as it limits access for enterprises and individuals from other Member States to those public services. In addition, Member States run the risk of not complying with their legal obligations under EU legislation.

The current European Union framework in the context of the Action Plan in question offers horizontal and sectoral instruments to facilitate and enhance the use of e-signatures and e-identification. The [e-Signatures Directive](#) establishes the legal recognition of electronic signatures and a legal framework to promote their interoperability.

The objective of this Action Plan is to offer a comprehensive and pragmatic framework to achieve interoperable e-signatures and e-identification, which will simplify access of enterprises and citizens to cross-border electronic public services. To achieve this objective, the Action Plan focuses on a number of practical, organisational and technical issues, complementing the existing legal framework.

The Commission, in close collaboration with Member States will monitor the implementation of the Plan, aiming to ensure the coherence of the suggested measures, of the various legislative requirements at EU level and of the relevant operational projects. It will also assess whether further horizontal and/or sectoral initiatives are needed.

Further information:

- [Commission's Directorate-General for Communication's midday briefing of 2 December 2008](#)
- [Action Plan on e-signatures and e-identification to facilitate the provision of cross-border public services in the Single Market – COM\(2008\)798 final](#)
- [Report on the operation of Directive 1999/93/EC on a Community framework for electronic signatures](#)

EU: Broadband: Gap between best and worst performing countries in Europe narrowing - 2 December 2008

Broadband penetration in Europe continues to grow according to a recent report published by the European Commission. The report also shows the gap between EU countries narrowing and high-speed Internet in the EU as being widespread and faster with a speed, for the majority of connections, safely supporting even television on the Internet.

New figures published by the European Commission show that, in spite of reduced growth perspectives for the economy at large, broadband growth has continued in the last year throughout the EU, with an increase of 19.23 % between July 2007 and July 2008. On 1 July 2008, there were over 107 million fixed broadband lines in the EU, of which 17 million lines have been added since July 2007. Nine central European EU countries are above the United States which stands at 25 % according to [OECD June 2008 statistics](#).

The gap between the strongest and weakest broadband performers remains significant but is decreasing for the first time. This gap can mainly be explained by lack of competition and regulatory weaknesses. For example, while the market share for incumbent fixed broadband operators is beginning to stabilise at around 45 %, in some countries it has increased since July 2007. These main obstacles to broadband growth remain to be addressed through the reform of the EU's telecoms rules, which is currently under discussion by the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers.

The Commission also published the first figures showing fixed broadband speeds, which is an important indicator in a knowledge-based society. 74.8 % of reported lines in the EU are in the range of 2 Mbps and above: 62 % between 2 and 10 Mbps, 12.8 % above 10 Mbps. Greater data transmission speeds generally provide customers with more and better choice at a lower price per megabit. Extremely fast connections (up to 100 Mbps or beyond) such as fibre only cover 1.4 % of European Internet subscribers.

As the EU Commissioner for Information Society and Media, Viviane Reding, said:

"Broadband growth remains strong, with the top EU countries firmly remaining world leaders in broadband penetration. I am also glad that other countries in Europe are catching up. Under the European Economic Recovery Plan presented by the Commission this week, we plan to channel a further €1 billion of EU funding into High-speed Internet infrastructures. I expect that this additional measure, together with a strong policy emphasis

on effective competition and further market opening, will pave the way for 'Broadband for all Europeans' by 2010; and for 'High-speed Internet for all Europeans' by 2015".

Further information:

- [Original Europa press release](#)
 - [OECD Statistics for June 2008](#)
 - [Official European Commission Report – “Broadband access in the EU: situation at 1 July 2008”](#)
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Latest Publications

- [EU: Overview of Digital Support Initiatives for/by Immigrants and Ethnic Minorities in the EU27](#) 30 November 2008 | EU Institutions
 - [EU: Digital Literacy Review](#) 29 November 2008 | EU Institutions
 - [ES: Open Source Software for the Development of Spanish Public Administration](#) 30 September 2008 | Spain
-

EU: Overview of Digital Support Initiatives for/by Immigrants and Ethnic Minorities in the EU27 - 30 November 2008

Complete title: Overview of Digital Support Initiatives for/by Immigrants and Ethnic Minorities in the EU27

Description (short summary):

Immigrants and Ethnic Minorities (henceforth IEM) are an important and growing component of European society, which has been the host in recent years to around 1.5 to 2 million net entries to the EU25 Member States. High levels of immigration into Europe are also expected to continue in the coming decades. In addition to new arrivals, the children of yesterday's and today's immigrants will, in any case, be a growing part of tomorrow's European student, worker and overall population.

In the face of this evolution, the 2006 Riga Declaration on eInclusion identified, as one of its six priorities, the promotion of cultural diversity in Europe by "improving the possibilities for economic and social participation and integration, creativity and entrepreneurship of immigrants and minorities by stimulating their participation in the information society". This priority has also been renewed by the 2007 eInclusion Communication.

Since very little was actually known about the adoption and use of new digital technologies and services by IEM in Europe, DG Information Society and Media of the European Commission asked the JRC-IPTS to carry out a study that would explore ICT adoption by IEM and how it affects their social and economic integration and participation in Europe. This report presents the results of the study's first step, which aimed to identify and broadly characterize ICT-based initiatives carried out for and/or by IEM in all the EU27 Member States.

Original URL: <http://ipts.jrc.ec.europa.eu/publications/pub.cfm?id=1888>

Number of pages: 168

EU: Digital Literacy Review - 29 November 2008

Complete title:

Digital Literacy – European Commission Working Paper – and Recommendations from Digital Literacy High-Level Expert Group

Description (short summary):

The report presents the outcome of the Digital Literacy Review undertaken by the Commission as part of the commitments made in the Riga Declaration in 2006 and in the eInclusion Communication in 2007 (COM(2007) 694 final). In the framework of this Review, 470 digital literacy initiatives across the EU were analysed together with the results of the digital literacy module of the Community Survey on ICT usage in Households and by Individuals.

The main conclusions are:

- Member States have invested in large digital literacy programmes over the last ten years as part of their Lisbon priorities for Information Society and as a result regular Internet use has grown rapidly, particularly among young persons for whom skill levels and usage rates exceed that of the USA.
- Digital literacy remains a major challenge and more efforts need to be dedicated to supporting disadvantaged groups, in particular those over 55.
- There is evidence that secondary digital divides may be emerging in relation to quality of use and more needs to be done to increase the levels of confidence and trust in online transactions and the use of ICT for lifelong learning for all.

The Review also identified good practices to bring disadvantaged groups online and the key features are summarised and grouped according to motivation, affordability and sustainability, content and delivery and accessibility and usability.

Original URL: http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/eeurope/i2010/index_en.htm

Number of pages: 23

ES: Open Source Software for the Development of Spanish Public Administration - 30 September 2008

Complete title:

"Open Source Software for the Development of the Spanish Public Administration. An Overview. 2008"

"Software de fuentes abiertas para el desarrollo de la Administración Pública Española. Una visión global. 2008"

Description (short summary):

The study collects quantitative data on the spread of open source software in public administrations and analyses in depth the most outstanding paradigmatic study cases for the adoption of open source software. In addition, it introduces the most important legal aspects to take into account when deciding on this type of software in the public administration. It also provides an exhaustive review from the perspective of supply and demand for open source software projects promoted by public administrations. All this is further complemented by a comparative view of the situation that the development of free software is undergoing in other public administrations beyond Spanish borders, particularly within the European Union.

Finally, one of the greatest and most valuable contributions of this document is the detailed proposal of recommendations issued by a group of specialist experts, brought together from the National Observatory for Open Source Software. These recommendations will serve as a guide to those public administrations and organisations concerned with assessing the best methodology for introducing the model of free software development into their own work groups, as well as companies and communities interested in participating proactively in these initiatives.

Original URL:

http://observatorio.cenatic.es/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=39:software-de-fuentes-abiertas-para-el-desarrollo-de-la-administracion-publica-espanola-una-vision-global-2008&catid=5:administraciones-publicas&Itemid=21

Number of pages: 149

Upcoming Events

- [BE: Open workshop 'Regional Broadband: the USO and the NGA'](#) 9 - 10 December 2008 | Belgium
- [ES: ableTech'08](#) 10 - 11 December 2008 | Spain
- [TR: "First International Conference on eGovernment and eGovernance" of TURKSAT](#) 12 - 13 March 2009 | Turkey

BE: Open workshop 'Regional Broadband: the USO and the NGA' - 9 - 10 December 2008

Open workshop on "Regional Broadband: the Universal Service Obligation (USO) and the Next Generation Access (NGA)" - A discussion on future trends

The European Commission has recently opened the debate as to whether the USO should be extended to include 'basic' broadband. Most regions are concerned with competitiveness, jobs and inclusion and should ensure they are well informed on the issues relating to them – especially the USO and what could mean to include broadband, the state of the art with respect to NGA, and what role the regions should play in this unfolding scenario.

The workshop aims to bring together well-informed commentators in these important fields and will provide opportunities to engage them in debate through Round Table Discussions and Q&A sessions.

The [event brochure and draft agenda](#) have been made available.

Registration is to be performed by filling out the [dedicated form](#) which is to be returned completed either by email to admin@erisa.be or by fax to +32 (0)2 230 92 01 not later than 1 December 2008. Participation is free of charge.

Country: Belgium

Organiser: eris@ - European Regional Information Society Association

Event website: <http://www.ianis.net/resources/Pages/displayEvent.aspx?ItemID=2088>

Event email: admin@erisa.be

ES: ableTech'08 - 10 - 11 December 2008

ableTech'08 – First International Conference on accessible and assistive technologies for dependent people

After four successful editions, ableTech has taken a qualitative leap by going international, with the aim of becoming a key event for sector players. Attendees will be able to gain first-hand knowledge of those international innovative projects breaking ground in the social and technological spheres.

This event aims to be a forum where international stakeholders from the sector of accessible and assistive technologies can exchange their experiences in order to learn from the best practices of other countries. During the two days conference, delegates will debate the following issues:

- To provide a vision of the current situation and trends of the Assistive Technologies Sector and the ageing economy;
- To bring together the different agents in order to be able to exchange experiences and contrast the needs with the existing products and systems;
- To identify the needs of people with disabilities and elderly people for their everyday lives and for improving their quality of life.

Furthermore, within the main conference, the European Project CompanionAble will organise a workshop aimed at sharing experience with other European projects involved in Cognitive Robotics and Ambient Intelligence Technologies and developing a closer collaboration between the various Consortia Partners involved in Research and Innovation on such technologies.

Over 350 participants are expected. Registration has started since 15 September 2008. Participation is free of charge for people with disabilities (in case of early registration, i.e. prior to 31 October) and students. For other interested persons, the attendance fee ranges from €150 to €250. Registration is to be performed by sending an email to abletech08@marsans.es.

More details on this event can be found on the dedicated [brochure](#).

This Conference has been organised with the support of Public Administrations, Technology oriented organisations, as well as Professional and user organisations. Cooperation efforts have been done with relevant European Projects related.

Country: Spain

Organiser: TECNALIA
Event website: www.abletech.org
Event email: abletech08@robotiker.es

TR: “First International Conference on eGovernment and eGovernance” of TURKSAT - 12 - 13 March 2009

"First International Conference on eGovernment and eGovernance"

The first International Conference on eGovernment and eGovernance of TURKSAT (Turksat Satellite Communication Cable TV and Operation Inc.) will provide the opportunity for all stakeholders to gain an understanding of real-world eGovernment and eGovernance issues.

The conference will consist of keynote addresses, a plenary session, technical sessions and a panel discussion covering a wide range of topics in the eGovernment and eGovernance areas. It has been organised by and for an audience of leaders, bureaucrats, technocrats, researchers, practitioners and academic across the globe to present and discuss on their research findings and experiences in the field of the specific domain areas.

Registration is to be performed by filling out the [dedicated form](#) available at the event's website. The conference fee is €70, which is payable in advance and should be received by December 19, 2008.

Country: Turkey
Organiser: SoSReS (Social Sciences Research Society)
Event website: <http://icegov.info/>
Event email: icegov@sobiad.org

UK: Patient 2.0 Empowerment - EHR for Personalizing and Improving Care - 1 - 3 June 2009

6th ICMCC Event – "Patient 2.0 Empowerment - EHR for Personalizing and Improving Care"

In a recently published paper, the ICMCC defined Patient 2.0 Empowerment as: the active participation of the citizen in his or her health and care pathway with the interactive use of Information and Communication Technologies.

Dealing with medical and care compunetics, the field of social, societal and ethical implications of computing and networking, ICMCC decided to focus the 2009 event on Electronic Health Records (EHR) and secondarily, the connection between EHR and Digital Homecare.

The main themes of the conference are as follows:

- EHR and Knowledge Mangement;
- Social aspects of EHR;
- Ethical aspects of EHR;
- EHR and Digital Homecare;
- Future of EHR (visionary).

The [call for papers](#) is open until 1 February 2009. Authors are encouraged to focus their contributions from a patient's perspective.

Country: United Kingdom
Organiser: International Council on Medical and Care Compunetics (ICMCC)
Event website: <http://2009.icmcc.org/>
Event email: event@icmcc.org

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