A lot of events are organised on Cyber security such as the Trust Services Forum 2016 organised by ENISA the same day of the dinner debate at the Europe Internet Forum. When CECUA has proposed the topic last year to the EIF programming Committee we wanted to stress the reason behind Cyber security: Trust.

Trust is a necessary but not sufficient condition for public or private Internet services

As anticipated by Alvin Toffler already in 1970, we are all facing an accelerating “future shock” with unknown future and dynamics. Issues are now global and with increasing complexity. The stakeholders have, sometimes, conflicting interests. New technologies, to name just a few them E-Health, Internet of things, Industry 4.0 or Smart City which will be the topic to tomorrow’s breakfast debate, bring new benefits and innovative solutions to undertake our society challenges. But they also come with new vulnerabilities and critical threats. There is an urgent need for extraordinary measures.

On paper, Users, Consumers and Citizens are powerful: they vote with their wallet and their ballot. They are the largest in number stakeholder but, in practice, they are outperformed by the Industry. They are under represented lacking of awareness, knowledge and resources. There are not enough structures to represent the interests of Users/Consumers/Citizens and get what does the User/Consumer/Citizen want. Who cares about him?

Some needs and requirements of users and citizens are in contrast with the goals of other stakeholders. Furthermore, we have to consider that there are only few common views among users and we all know that normal citizens are not sufficiently aware of the threats and problems related to our digital future. Unfortunately, without deeper knowledge it is not possible to understand consequences and to perceive your own interests and the on-going changes. But on the other hand there is no market without acceptance and without trust of buyers and there is no viable solution without the very difficult anticipation of future requirements. Therefore, some kind of compromises and a pragmatic and goal-oriented approach are necessary.

From this point of view let us have a general look at the European Commission, the Parliament and the member states. Overall, their efforts have to be increased in general and have to be increased in particular with regard to the needs of users and citizens. For European Commission, the Parliament and the member states there is an urgent need for much broader attention to trust and Cyber security. We need a cyber security culture in Europe. With regard to user needs Commission, Parliament and member states should support local, national and European user associations. There is a broad range of measures that would be helpful. As a specific example more awareness in media and school curricula at all level would improve the general situation. Furthermore, there should be qualified user representation at board level in organizations like EIF, ENISA, EURid and others.

Let’s come back to the general view: the key question is “Who knows best the needs of the IT users?”. Commissionaire Bangemann said: The Industry.

CECUA says: Users and Industry.

Related action should be started.

By Didier Carré & Dr Bruno Vogel, 14/05/2016

CECUA is a non-profit user association registered in Brussels
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CECUA: Confederation of European Computer User Associations

CECUA is an independent multinational non-for profit organization ASBL registered in 1983. CECUA´s mission is to be the User´s voice at strategic level.

CECUA is member of

- EIF (European Internet Forum)
  - Long-term board member
  - Participation in organizing events
  - Contributor to the report Digital World 2030
- EURid (European Registry of Internet Domain Names) conceptual father
- ENISA (European Network Information Security Agency)-Partner
- FAIB (Federation of European and International Associations)

CECUA has been an advisor to the European Commission on User Interfaces, IT Services procurement... and has organized international conferences related to the Citizen in the Global Information Society.

CECUA has proposed a Bill of Rights for the Citizens of the Information Society.

If you want to know more about CECUA, visit www.cecua.eu