The User 4.0 What is he or she?

In the media we hear a lot about industry 4.0, Internet of things, Smart cites, Smart cars, etc. But the focus is on the technical perspective. There is no mention of the user who has to put up with all this technology. How is he expected to cope with the challenges it presents to him?

CECUA was founded more than a quarter of a century ago. At the beginning CECUA advised the Commission on User Interface issues and also on Public Procurement Contract issues. Now User Interface or Usability is the subject for IT usability specialists, sociologists and psychologists. And public procurement contracts are now in the hands of the legal profession. Being a pioneer and then leaving it in the hands of others. That is innovation at its best.

CECU has reinvented itself. CECUA’s vision is to be the Strategic User Voice at European Level focusing on the Internet, Usability and Security. CECUA was involved in the preparations for .eu as a Safe and User friendly Internet zone. Presently CECUA works with EURid, EIF and now ENISA to name a few besides being accredited to the WSIS.

From the user perspective Internet Security is more than a technical issue, it is no less a human issue, a user issue. It is both a technical and a user issue. Without the user the best technical solution cannot provide security. But the user must have the necessary knowledge and knowhow. It is not enough for the user to be aware of Internet security, he or she needs more. Being aware alone is not enough. The user needs more, much more to cope with all the technical challenges he is faced with in the digital world today. Every day he is challenged with new things, the latest being drones or robots delivering goods to him at his doorsteps. He needs to feel comfortable in this new world full of technology to be able to make the best use of it. And awareness is definitely not enough. Let us look closer at awareness.

Basic Awareness:

Knowing that Internet and Internet Security exists, the user is passive.

Awareness means being aware of. Or in other words know of it. That is all it does. The user is passive.

Good Awareness:

Able to use the Internet including Internet Security and can use readymade applications, e.g. Office, Google, Skype, Facebook, Twitter, etc. The user has become active.

Advanced Awareness:

Able to write some programs, apps etc. The user is very active.

Let us call this the 3 levels of awareness, Passive, Active and Very active
But users are different. For example, they are of different ages, **Young, Middle aged and Old**. Now we have put awareness into 3 categories and ages into 3 also. Let us put them together. What comes out of it?

Most of the older people fall into the Basic Awareness box, aware but passive. The middle aged ones fall into both Basic Awareness and also to some extent into Good Awareness having acquired those skills on the job. The young ones fall into Advanced Box. Those are the **Users 4.0** we so desperately need. Prosperity through innovation (Lisbon treaty) calls out loud for such people. They will not appear automatically; they have to be grown. How can we do that? By making IT a part of every school curriculum besides reading and writing and arithmetic. This calls for investment in hardware and software and in teacher training. The school is the right place for producing User 4.0. This calls for decisions at all levels, political and administrative. The irony is that the people responsible for making such decisions themselves are in the left column or maybe in the middle column. Most people make decisions based on own past experience. And when those people were growing up there was no IT at all. So they have a hard time to understand what is all this fuss about? Why is the blackboard and the piece of chalk not enough anymore? Is there any other alternative?

Estonia says NO and has launched a nationwide scheme to teach school kids from the age of seven to 19, how to write code. The idea isn’t to start churning out app developers of the future, but **people who have smarter relationships with technology, computers and the Web**. Please note this is NATIONWIDE. Those kids are all going to be USERs 4.0. What Estonians can do others can also do.

This will be too late for the middle aged. However, the EU has supported the European Computer Driver License program or ECDL. 11 million people around the world have got the European Computer Driver License.

For a general reach-out events like the ECSM as organized by ENISA are very important. However, one month a year is not nearly enough. 12 months a year ECSM would not be enough. ENISA cannot do it alone. The member states from national government all the way down to municipalities have to be on board. But ESCM is a good start and we at CECUA wish it all the best and are ready to help in any way we can.

Prof. Dr. Jon Thorhallsson, CECUA President