

The future Internet is starting now



●●● Europe is heading for a huge Internet crash as we're ignoring the limits of today's Internet. If we continue as we are, it is quite likely that the standards of service in the Internet will start to decline dramatically by 2010. The

issue now is to work out a European solution for the European market.

We are also plagued in Europe with a crisis of confidence as once we begin discussing the changes and necessary improvements, there is a significant part of the intellectual community that feels insecure having such a discussion without bringing in players from the US and Asia.

This cannot continue. Europe has to take responsibility for the future of the Internet in Europe. Once we have our ideas on what we want, we can present our concepts and discuss them on the global stage. Our current practice of sending individual experts to inter-continental meetings is merely exporting our competence and handing the industrial advantage to others.

Europe has now motivated more research capital in the FP7 framework and related national programmes than any of the current US initiatives. The planned expenditures over the next five years are sufficiently substantial to have a major impact in developing the future Internet but we need to be brave.

Why is it so difficult today to discuss the inevitable changes? It is almost a total contradiction that the early adopters of the Internet - who have led dramatic changes in technology and society over the past few years - are now becoming the Luddites, refusing to move on to consider the next stage of the information age revolution. Yesterdays' revolutionaries have become the roadblock. They are mentally attached to the solution invented by them and can not (or do not want to) see its limits and thus are incapable of moving forward.

The basic architecture of the Internet needs a new approach. Best effort has served us well but it has been supported by over-dimensioning networks to date. However the rate of growth of content and its universal distribution is shortly going to mean the data flows exceed the practicality and financial sense of continual over-dimensioning of networks.

The new network architecture must have the flexibility of the Internet, both personal and terminal mobility, the stability and bandwidth of the fixed networks, the richness of content from professional and private content creators and the overall security that gives us all confidence to do business and commercial transactions.

NEM is currently gathering its first compilation of Future Internet issues and assembling them into a publication. We should be able to publish our first set of future Internet scenarios next spring. All are welcome to join the NEM future Internet activity.

We now propose the launch of the European Internet Forum as there are a significant number of European projects in 2008 addressing various aspects of the future Internet, each of the technology platforms are considering the subject and it will be necessary to bring together all the emerging ideas into some common forum.

This forum will have the objective of bringing together the European views on the Future Internet and being the representative of the European views in the global forum. We have a mature market in Europe that requires European solutions, as distinct from being forced to adopt solutions developed for other markets.

This will also give European industry and network operators a good degree of confidence to invest in the products and the migration strategies that will actually enable this revolution.

NEM is committed to helping define the Future Internet and will help set up the European Internet Forum. You now have to decide if you are going to be part of this revolution. The train won't wait.....

DAVID KENNEDY
 Director, Eurescom