



UK Internet Governance Forum

Workshop Reports UK Internet Governance Forum Spring messaging event Tuesday 8 February

The workshops were split into three sections. The first section, 'Cloud Computing', was chaired by Rt Hon Alun Michael MP in the absence of John Robertson MP. The second was 'Access' chaired by Stephen Mosley MP. Thirdly, Mike Weatherley MP chaired the 'Future of Internet Content'.

Cloud Computing – Alun Michael:

The two key conclusions from the workshop were that the success of cloud computing depends on good governance and it is essential that it is simplistic with a clear outline of responsibilities.

In order to establish trust, there must be clarification on continuity between businesses. It was also suggested in the workshop that it shouldn't be described as cloud computing but as 'lots of clouds'. Furthermore, security must be balanced alongside the huge benefits cloud computing can produce.

There was also a concern that it could become dominated by large international companies, but the panel was unsure if this was necessary a bad thing. Finally, the group discussed who should oversee the cloud before concluding that this needs to be lightweight, de-centralised, and non-bureaucratic. State lead answers are not the answer as the services are not provided by Government departments.

Members of the group had shared e-mail addresses and would continue the discussion on-line.

Access – Stephen Mosley:

In the Access workshop, Natasha Innocent began proceedings by mentioning the 9.2 million who have never had internet access, over 50% of whom are over 55. Bill Pechey argued that more should be done for deaf people, especially in the world of video, pointing to the lack of subtitles on BBC iPlayer.

Dr David Newman said it was not just a problem of access, but that once access has been made proper training needs to be given so those that have access can be empowered to use the internet to its full potential. Thus achieving access is far from the end of the problem, he said.

From the ensuing discussion, Mr Mosley concluded that a lot of support needs to be given to education as well as developing easy to use devices and understandable applications.

Future of Internet Content – Mike Weatherley:

This workshop proposed the interesting idea of the future of the internet as an 'information locker' with personalised lockers of storage that can be accessed anywhere. Jean-Jacques Sahel from Skype spoke of the need for government leadership to harmonise the expansion of services to avoid sub sets of the internet. Martin Geddes spoke of the internet

being enabled in everything that we do with mobile, social and cloud being the future of content.

Mike St John Green from the Cabinet Office suggested that the internet would be an opportunity, but equally a threat and referenced seven principles outlined by William Hague.

Mr Weatherley discussed whether there was a mild consensus on the issue of internet access as a human right. The workshop concluded it wasn't, but recognised that business models need to change and adapt towards a form of intellectual property rights online, so that the baby is not thrown out with the bathwater.

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