"The Internet of Things: an opportunity for European economy and industry"
IoT Polish EU Presidency conference
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Speaking points of ANEC presentation "Session 2: towards governance of the IoT and the Internet" by Chiara Giovannini, ANEC Research and Innovation Manager

First of all, I would like to thank very much the meeting organisers for having me here in Poznan, on behalf of ANEC. It is indeed a great pleasure and honour to participate in this panel discussion on the governance of the Internet and Internet of Things.

I would also like to spend a few words about ANEC, the association representing consumers in standardisation. ANEC was created in 1995 by the national consumers associations and public authorities in EU member states and EFTA countries. We are supported by the European Union and EFTA Secretariat and we are very grateful to our donors. Our members contribute in kind.

ANEC's mission is to promote and defend the consumer interest, not only in European and international standardisation but also in the shaping of legislation on consumer products and services.

We can in fact provide technical and policy expertise based on a network of consumer representatives across Europe. Our experts directly contribute to the work of the Technical Committees of the European Standards Bodies (CEN/CENELEC/ETSI) and International Standardisation Organisations (ISO/IEC).

Consumers position on IoT

As I have stated already several times, consumers need confidence to fully embrace the Internet of Things in order to enjoy its potential benefits.

This is why we came up two years ago with the expression "Internet of Things for People" which was then taken onboard by the European Commission in their Communication on IoT. We have now created a new acronym, IOT4P, in order to better fit to the technology and standardisation environment, where acronyms are "all the rage'. I would like to thank ANEC representative Peter Eisenegger for this.

However, another way to see the consumer position, is to think about the fact that we are very small fishes swimming in a pond full of big fishes. The predominance of industry in policy and standardisation discussions is a key factor to take into account. And this is shown by the very title of this conference "The Internet of Things: an opportunity for European economy and industry" as if we, consumers, are not part of the economy, like industry is.

Web 3.0 and IoT

Now, it is always very difficult to make categories of technologies as there is no clear agreement/consensus amongst all the actors concerned, and many of you will probably disagree with me.

But in today's Web 2.0 (e.g.: social networks) privacy is already a competitive advantage as consumers expect that the use of their data is lawful and legitimate.

Web 3.0 or 4.0 technologies (e.g.: semantic web services, AI), will allow for increased profiling and behavioural advertisement to consumers. What happens if "open data" or "raw data" become "personal data"?

It is likely that IoT will be based on or will be "absorbing" Web 3.0 or 4.0 technologies. Therefore parallels between Internet of Things and Internet Governance are needed but probably are not enough as security, privacy and interoperability are still hot issues in Internet Governance but also automatic decision making issues (eg: when consumers seem not to be in control of the decisions as all is done by the system), typical of IoT applications, are to be taken into account.

This is a point I already made at the previous Presidency event on Internet of Things, in May in Budapest. I made my last slide on a picture of a nuclear power plant to indicate the issue of automatic decision making and I remember it made people react!

IoT principles

And because of that, the issue of "who owns what" in terms of objects identifies /information/databases could be different for IoT then the Internet, in particular for private/public management of identifiers as well as the geographical origin of the public/private actors involved.

It is also likely that the IoT governance will have to reflect any new international order as the present Internet Governance might be a thing of the past.

Another important aspect from a consumer point of view is the application of competition law principles and fair commercial practices, in order to avoid consumers being "locked-in" in IoT vertical applications. This is definitely something we do not wish to happen, as we already had (and probably still have) some examples in the present Internet.

Role of Public Authorities

Of course, at this stage, it is very early to identify precisely what public authorities should be doing. They are faced with the challenging task of managing the merge of today's independent aspects that IoT will bring along: business, private life, citizenship, consumerism, leisure, etc.

And to do so, they might "mutate" in what is now only a concept, the concept of "Soft Institutions". But one thing is crystal clear for us, now as for the future, we expect public authorities to be the police and whistle-blowers. And for a referee to act, you need rules of the game.

Role of standards

One way to set rules, is to define standards, implementing legislation. However, let me be clear, it is not my role to "sell you the importance of standardisation". ANEC role is to represent consumer interests in standardisation, when standards are used by public policies as tool for consumer protection and welfare enhancement.

This seems to be the case of Internet of Things as the European Commission announced the intention of issuing a standardisation mandate in the near future. This is why ANEC is actively participating in the ad hoc group on IoT set up by CEN TC 225. We made proposals for IoT4P standards to be elaborated on the following aspects:

- Good application design

- User application interferences (usability/accessibility)

- Tools for consumers to play their part in security, data protection and privacy for IoT4P, so called "consumer empowerment".

Conclusions

In the Internet of Things, objects will be identified and will be capable to act independently

Consumers will interact with those objects

To apply the web "buzz' expression to consumer protection, we call for "Consumer Protection 3.0", based on the principle of Openness, Interoperability, Neutrality, Trust, Privacy, Security, Transparency, User control, accountability, etc, to be one of the building block of the Internet of Things Governance.

Thank you very much for your attention!

Chiara Giovannini holds a master degree in European Law. Since 2002, she is Research & Innovation Manager, responsible for the management of the ANEC research & testing projects as well as the sectors of Design for All (Accessibility), Nanotechnologies and Information Society, including information and communications technologies (ICT). She represents ANEC in several European Commission Committees and Expert Groups (ECCG, COCOM, IoT Expert Group) and CEN/CENELEC/ETSI Committees and Working Groups.

ANEC in Brief

ANEC is the European consumer voice in standardisation, defending consumer interests in the processes of technical standardisation and conformity assessment as well as related legislation and public policies. ANEC was established in 1995 as an international non-profit association under Belgian law and represents consumer organisations from 31 countries. ANEC is funded by the European Union and EFTA, with national consumer organisations contributing in kind. Its Secretariat is based in Brussels.

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