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Abstract

Title:

Digital Confidence – Is Europe’s Information Society ready for a shift from ICT company driven data protection to user driven data management?

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Secrecy of telecommunications and user anonymity are classical distinguishing features in telephony and in (mobile) internet usage. However, this freedom not to be supervised in the private use of internet and telecommunication services is in danger: technical development of tracking and data collection tools on the web as well as data warehouses challenge the basic concept of anonymity, in particular on the internet. As telecommunication providers are shifting to online companies, providing secure information/data services to their customers is more in the public focus than ever. Thus, implementation of EU Commission’s Communication “A Digital Agenda for Europe” [COM(2010) 245 final/2] becomes highly important.

New convergent (mobile) internet products include geolocation services and social networks of various kinds. In this regard European ICT industry companies must look beyond the short term legal requirements of data protection and unfair competition law. Both, digital natives as well as digital immigrants want control over their personal data, however in particular digital natives might agree in a different use of their personal data. Prerequisites for such more flexible use of personal data are that (i) transparency and informed consent, (ii) choice and privacy by design (iii) choice and right to be forgotten as well as (iv) information security are assured at highest levels.

Implementing the digital confidence principles with new ICT industry products is necessary to overcome fragmental digital markets, cybercrime risk and low trust in networks in Europe. This will inevitably lead towards more user driven data management with regard to telecommunication and online services. This paper and corresponding speech are about potential measures of success to reach these goals.