European Commission: Consultation on the Transition to Web 3.0

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On 29 September 2008 the European Commission published a communication addressing future networks and the Internet.

According to the report, broadband and Internet services have been adopted en masse by Europeans, thereby impacting European society and economy significantly. Internet use continues to grow and change in Europe and is speculated to continue to flourish, its changes predicted to result in new opportunities for European businesses and citizens.

The pervasiveness of broadband in Europe has shifted the way in which users engage with the Internet. The Internet is increasingly participative and its data traffic is rising. The increase in the use of broadband and the increasingly nomadic use of the web is expected to usher Europeans into an age of the "Internet of things" whereby machines, vehicles, appliances and sensors will interact via the web. This new Internet – Web 3.0 – is described as "anytime, anywhere business, entertainment and social networking over fast reliable and secure networks".

In its communication, the Commission speculates that Web 3.0 will offer Europe many opportunities, such as an increase in the productivity of businesses, societal innovation, new jobs and new and expanding markets in the next decade, all of which would improve Europeans' quality of life. Given Europe's already important use of broadband, the Commission is confident that "Europe has the know-how and the network capacity to lead this transformation".

The Commission argues that the Internet is vital to development strategies in many sectors of the global economy and its social and economic potential is playing out as part of the post-Lisbon agenda. While stressing its great potential, the communication addresses the challenges of Web 3.0, namely keeping the Internet economy open in order to innovate business models, equipping networks for the Internet of the future and tackling security and privacy challenges. The Commission recommends that the EU stimulate investment in the next generation broadband access and promote "Broadband for All". The Commission further recommends keeping the Internet open to competition by reinforcing end users' interests and preventing and removing anti-competitive conduct. The Commission

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urges the EU to confront a changing Internet to meet the "rising demand of scalability, mobility, flexibility, security, trust and robustness". Finally, the communication addresses the challenge of privacy and security by noting a forthcoming Commission Recommendation on "RFID, data protection, privacy and security", and promising a new strategy on privacy and trust in the ubiquitous information society.

A public consultation was launched along with the communication which will allow the Commission to assess policy and private sector responses to the future of the web. A "Broadband Performance Index" is also proposed in the communication. This index compares member states' performance in broadband speed, price, competition and coverage. The Commission notes that a broader debate will be required to address policy responses to Web 3.0 and its role in modernising Europe's economy and society.

"Commission consults on how to put Europe into the lead of the transition to Web 3.0", Brussels, 29 September 2008, IP/08/1422

http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/08/1422&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en

Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on future networks and the internet, COM(2008) 594 final, Brussels, 29 September 2008

http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/eeurope/i2010/docs/future_internet/act_future_networks_internet_en.pdf

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