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RFID in Europe (RACE NetworkRFID)

ICT-PSP: a European concerted effort on RFID

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RE	Restricted to a group specified by the consortium (including the Commission Services)	
CO	Confidential, only for members of the consortium (including the Commission Services)	CO

Preface

RFID in Europe work package 1:

“Policy Liaison and Collaboration“

The objectives of this quarterly updates are to:

- Facilitate and disseminate up to date policy information that will be used in the ongoing implementation of the rest of the WP deliverables.
- Bring together the public policy related activities of RFID in Europe for the use of other WPs in particular WP 5, 6, 7 and 9.
- Address EU policies, where appropriate national initiatives in the EU and linkage to non EU policy developments for relevance to RFID in Europe.

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Introduction

This update provides information about several recent outcomes and events around RFID which are relevant for the Network: In particular, we report in this issue on the adoption of the Privacy Impact Assessment Framework by the European Commission and the Article 29 Working Party; We also report on the RFID in Europe conference in March 2011, and other interesting events coming up this quarter, such as the EU Presidency IoT conference in Budapest in May. Finally, you will find some information on the 2011 work programme of the ICT PSP and the focus for the current call for proposals.

Privacy Impact Assessment Framework endorsed!

The Privacy Impact Assessment Framework was officially endorsed on 11 February 2011 by the Article 29 Working Party, a consultative body composed of representatives of national data protection authorities at the EU level. The text is now published on the European Commission's website at http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/policy/rfid/index_en.htm

The European Commission organised a signing ceremony on 6 April 2011. Participants included Neelie Kroes, Vice President of the European Commission in charge of the Digital Agenda, as well as Mr. Kohnstamm (Chair of Article 29 WP), Pr. Helmbrecht (Executive Director of the European Network and Information Security Agency [ENISA]) and Industry representatives (GS1, ERRT, AIM Germany, Bitkom, Deutsche Post/DHL, and Eurocommerce).

Press release from the European Commission:

Brussels, 6th April 2011

Digital Agenda: new guidelines to address privacy concerns over use of smart tags

Today the European Commission has signed a voluntary agreement with industry, civil society, ENISA (European Network and Information Security Agency) and privacy and data protection watchdogs in Europe to establish guidelines for all companies in Europe to address the data protection implications of smart tags (Radio Frequency Identification Devices – RFID) prior to placing them on the market. The use of such smart tags is expanding enormously (around 1 billion in Europe in 2011) but there are widespread concerns about their privacy implications. RFIDs can be found in many objects from bus passes to smart cards that pay motorway tolls. Microelectronic devices can process data automatically from RFID tags when brought close to 'readers' that activate them, pick up their radio signal and exchange data with them. Today's agreement forms part of the implementation of a Commission Recommendation adopted in 2009 (see IP/09/740) that inter alia indicates that when consumers buy products with smart tags, they should be deactivated automatically, immediately and free of- charge unless the consumer agrees explicitly that they are not. Neelie Kroes, European Commission Vice-President for the Digital Agenda said "I warmly welcome today's milestone agreement to put consumers' privacy at the centre of smart tag technology and to make sure privacy concerns are addressed before products are placed on the market. I'm pleased that industry is working with consumers, privacy watchdogs and others to address legitimate concerns over data privacy and security related to the use of these smart tags. This sets a good example for other industries and technologies to address privacy concerns in Europe in a practical way."

The agreement signed today, "Privacy and Data Protection Impact Assessment (PIA) Framework for RFID Applications", aims to ensure consumers' privacy before RFID tags are introduced on a massive scale (see IP/09/952). Around 2.8 billion smart tags are predicted to be sold in 2011, with about one third of these in Europe. But industry estimates that there could be up to 50 billion connected electronic devices by 2020.

RFID tags in devices such as mobile phones, computers, fridges, e-books and cars bring many potential advantages for businesses, public services and consumer products. Examples include improving product reliability, energy efficiency and recycling processes, paying road tolls without

having to stop at toll booths, cutting time spent waiting for luggage at the airport and lowering the environmental footprint of products and services.

However RFID tags also raise potential privacy, security and data protection risks. This includes the possibility of a third party accessing your personal data (e.g. concerning your location) without your permission. For example, many drivers pay tolls electronically to use roads, airport and car parks based on data collected through RFID tags on their car windscreens. Unless preventative action is taken, RFID readers found outside those specific locations could unwittingly lead to privacy leaks revealing the location of the vehicle. Many hospitals use RFID tags to track inventory and identify patients. While this technology can improve the overall quality of healthcare, the benefits must be balanced with privacy and security concerns.

Comprehensive assessment of privacy risks

Under the agreement, companies will carry out a comprehensive assessment of privacy risks and take measures to address the risks identified before a new smart tag application is introduced onto the market. This will include the potential impact on privacy of links between the data collected and transmitted and other data. This is particularly important in the case of sensitive personal data such as biometric, health or identity data.

The PIA Framework establishes for the first time in Europe a clear methodology to assess and mitigate the privacy risks of smart tags that can be applied by all industry sectors that use smart tags (for example, transport, logistics, the retail trade, ticketing, security and health care).

In particular, the PIA framework will not only give companies legal certainty that the use of their tags is compatible with European privacy legislation but also offer better protection for European citizens and consumers.

Background

In May 2009 all interested stakeholders from industry, standardisation bodies, consumers' organisations, civil society groups, and trade unions, agreed to respect a Recommendation from the European Commission laying out principles for privacy and data protection in the use of smart tags (see IP/09/740). Today's PIA Framework is part of the implementation of the 2009 Recommendation. Information gathered during the PIA framework drafting process will also make a valuable contribution to discussions on the revision of EU rules on Data Protection (see IP/10/1462 and MEMO/10/542) and on how to address the new challenges for personal data protection brought by technological developments.

RFID in Europe Conference and Exhibition, Prague, 29-31 March 2011

The RACE Network RFID (renamed RFID in Europe) organised a conference and exhibition in Prague from 29 to 31 March 2011. This event was an occasion for participants to learn more about the project and its objectives, as well as the different work packages activities and outcomes. The event had a strong focus on successful applications across Europe in such diverse sectors including Manufacturing, Healthcare, Public Transports, and Libraries.

An academic day was also organised as well as a government day to present the benefits of RFID to government officials.

Website of the event: <http://www.race-networkrfid.org/>

Internet of Things European Union Presidency conference, 16 May 2011

The Hungarian Presidency of the European Union will organise an Internet of Things conference in Budapest on 16 May 2011. This one-day conference is part of the Future of Internet Week taking place in Budapest from 16 to 20 May 2011. The high level conference on IoT will cover the usual topics of interest at the European level, such as Privacy, governance, and standardisation, but will also present applications.

Links:

IoT conference: <http://www.iot.sztaki.hu/index.php>

Future Internet Week: <http://www.fi-budapest.eu/>

ICT Policy Support Programme (ICT PSP) Work Programme 2011

The ICT Policy Support Programme (ICT PSP) Work Programme 2011 has been formally adopted. The 5th Call for Proposals is now open until the 1st of June 2011. ICT PSP aims at stimulating innovation and competitiveness through the wider uptake and best use of ICT by citizens, governments and businesses.

The content of the Call for Proposals in 2011 is “ICT for a Low Carbon Economy and smart mobility”, “Digital content”, “ICT for health and inclusion”, “ICT for innovative government and public services” and “Open innovation for Internet-enabled services”.

For more information on the 5th Call for Proposals:

http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/ict_psp/participating/calls/call_proposals_11/index_en.html

Upcoming events

Europe and Internet of Things - Leading the way forward

16-20 May, Budapest, Hungary

<http://www.iot.sztaki.hu/>

Digital Agenda Assembly

16-17 June 2011, Brussels, Belgium

http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/digital-agenda/daa/

3rd Annual Internet of Things Europe conference

28-29 June 2011, Brussels, Belgium

http://www.eu-ems.com/summary.asp?event_id=70&page_id=495

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