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Illustrated

Shaping a Secure Online Environment

Dear reader,

Welcome to the latest edition of .eu Illustrated! In this issue, we are excited to showcase EURid's activities, innovative services, goals, and valuable partnerships within the industry. We will also examine how these initiatives align with the European Commission's declaration for the future of the internet, emphasizing our commitment to shaping a more secure and user-friendly online environment.

And of course, we haven't forgotten to bring you inspiring .eu testimonials and practical tips on creating an appealing website. So, sit back, relax, and dive into the world of .eu!

EURid team



Supporting European Digital Literacy: EURid's Efforts and Actions!

By Alastair Gill

The publication of the EC's Declaration for the Future of the Internet presents us with a timely opportunity to highlight the projects we are working on that correspond to its key messages.

In April 2022, the European Commission published the Declaration for the Future of the Internet, a manifesto outlining its vision and principles for the development of a secure and reliable internet in collaboration with the EU's international partners.

The Declaration, which is intended to serve as a guideline or reference point for all those involved in public policy and civil society organisations, as well as businesses and ordinary citizens, outlines key principles in five different areas: Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms in the online environment; A Global Internet; Inclusive and Affordable Access to the Internet; Trust in the Digital Ecosystem; and Multi-Stakeholder Internet Governance.

As the organisation responsible for managing the .eu top-level domain, EURid is committed to following these principles and is taking an active lead in making this vision for a human-centric digital transformation a reality.

This article aims to highlight a few of its initiatives that support the declaration and promote online security, privacy and universal human rights.



Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms in the online environment

“EURid’s commitment to fighting abuse is not just about protecting the integrity of the domain name system, but also about safeguarding the online community’s trust in the internet as a whole. By actively combating abuse, EURid is ensuring a safer and more trustworthy online environment for all”, explains Jordi Iparraguirre, Innovation Manager at EURid.

One of the key projects Iparraguirre is involved with is the Abuse Prevention and Early Warning System (APEWS), which EURid has developed in tandem with KU Leuven. APEWS analyses domain name registrations and uses AI and professionally curated incident lists to identify and delay potentially abusive ones. The system is constantly updated with new data and is self-training.

Once a domain name is already registered, our Registry Lock and Registrar Lock services provide additional security, protecting the domain name from changes, deletions or transfers, whether caused by human error or as a result of third-party abuse.

EURid is also ensuring maximum transparency of domain name holders and the servers associated with each domain name by constantly improving the accuracy of its web-based WHOIS data, which can be of vital importance to law-enforcement and consumer protection bodies. The WHOIS Quality project checks the effectiveness of our WHOIS lookup service and fixes any inaccuracies.

It is also essential that all our activities meet GDPR compliance, and EURid started work on developing its GDPR roadmap in 2016, immediately after the strategy was adopted. As our Privacy Charter and Privacy Policy make clear, we take personal data protection very seriously and regularly review and update our policies and processes to ensure that personal data is secure, as well as continuously introducing new technical measures to eliminate risks.

Access to a clean environment is an important human right, and EURid was the first European TLD registry to be registered by the EU Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) in 2012. EMAS formalises our environmental commitment by continuously reducing the environmental impact of our activities and promoting the sustainability programme to our staff members.

“The GDPR and EMAS are two critical frameworks that are helping to ensure the protection of our planet and the privacy of its citizens. By promoting sustainable business practices and safeguarding personal data, these practices are contributing to a more secure and sustainable world for all”, says Geo Van Langenhove, EURid’s Legal Manager.

A Global Internet

“Collaborating with industry leaders is essential for EURid to stay at the forefront of the ever-evolving digital landscape”, says Regina Fuchsova, Industry Relations Manager. “By working together, we can leverage each other’s expertise, share best practices, and develop innovative solutions that benefit not only our respective organisations, but also the broader internet community”.

EURid collaborates extensively with several policy agencies, like the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), which coordinates the key technical services critical to the operation of the DNS, the internet’s underlying address database.

We also work with ICANN to support DNS training seminars in the Middle East, and in 2022 we signed an MOU to boost efforts to support multilingualism and inclusion on the internet.

Another is the Council for European Top Level Domain Registries (CENTR), a not-for-profit organisation that takes care of the interests of Europe’s country code top level domain managers (cc TLD managers) and promotes best practices. We play an active role in CENTR General Assemblies and workshops.

We also collaborate closely with the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO), which manages the EU trademark and the registered Community design, and offers innovators and creators a smooth and secure registration experience at national and EU level. For example, when you register a .eu domain name, we will inform you if a European trademark in the same name is still available for registration.

One other way we promote cooperation in research and innovation on responsible state behaviour in cyberspace is through the use of the new web categorisation tool WebClass. This is an automated machine learning solution that classifies web pages in any European language into use categories: Automotive, Education, Government, Health, etc. This helps us understand how the .eu domain is used and gives us business intelligence we can then share with our partners.



Inclusive and Affordable Access to the Internet

Here our aims are to facilitate greater exposure to diverse cultural and multilingual content and fortify resilience to disinformation through offering multilingual support, IDN extensions, and awareness campaigns.

EURid's Accessibility Statement outlines our commitment to making our public website and digital content available to all users, including those with disabilities.

Additionally, EURid is boosting its online visibility and promoting the benefits of the .eu domain by running awareness campaigns to enhance its presence and general recognition. The aim is to support the EC's Digital Single Market priority by encouraging more individuals and businesses to use the .eu extension for their websites, strengthening the EU's online identity and fostering a sense of togetherness among its citizens.

Since 2014 we have held the annual .eu Web Awards, a wonderful opportunity for website owners and entrepreneurs to promote their projects on a European level. This is an online contest that recognises and rewards the best websites with the .eu, .europa and .domain extensions, with an emphasis on highlighting innovative and creative online businesses and initiatives that are making a splash in their respective spheres.

Our .eu Academy offers training for professionals and students who are looking to enhance their digital skills. Under the .eu Academy umbrella, we have also arranged several workshops for primary school students and teachers during EU Code Week to introduce European youth to the world of coding and robotics.

And we plan to continue to organise the .eu Academy -Masterclasses, which bring together prominent industry experts on a range of topics, including AI, cybersecurity, branding, etc.

"The .eu Web Awards and .eu Academy are two powerful tools that EURid uses to promote excellence in online communication and digital skills development", says Reelika Kirna, EURid's Communications Manager. "The Web Awards recognise and celebrate the innovative achievements of website owners and developers, while the Academy provides valuable educational resources and training opportunities for individuals and organisations to enhance their digital knowledge".



Trust in the Digital Ecosystem

The safety of internet users and brands while using the .eu space is paramount for EURid – we take this extremely seriously and have a whole set of measures in place to ensure the security of our users. Not only do we carry out our own in-house checks on the identity of domain registrants and the accuracy of our data, we also have agreements with law-enforcement agencies (including Europol) and Belgian Federal Public Services to share information on abusive or illegal activities.

Once alerted to potential abuse, the experts can then proceed to investigate the domain name, involving the police or courts if necessary, before reporting back to us. If the registration needs to be suspended, they will let us know.

Our Know Your Customer (KYC) project allows domain name holders to use a variety of methods to validate their registration data automatically, simplifying the process for verifying registration data and lightening the administrative load for holders – and helping us to comply with GDPR. It also improves WHOIS data, making .eu a more trustworthy space.

We see education as vital in raising awareness of the different kinds of cyber threats and promoting good digital hygiene, and have several initiatives aimed at achieving this goal. We also have the ISO/IEC 27001 certification, which is a legal obligation according to the Belgian NIS Act (the transposed EU NIS directive). ISO 22301 is complimentary to the ISO/IEC 27001 certification and focuses on Business Continuity Management.



Multi-Stakeholder Internet Governance

EURid sees the best prospects for building trust and fostering opportunity in working together with stakeholders to discuss issues relating to internet governance and advance this vision based on a broad consensus. In that spirit, we have developed relationships with various internet governance organisations, many of which are fruitful and longstanding partnerships.

Since 2011 EURid has collaborated with UNESCO on Internationalised Domain Names (IDNs). Together with UNESCO and APTLD we produce the IDN World Report, which presents all the key data on the use of IDNs globally and gives an insight into the challenges involved with their adoption. EURid itself has launched two IDN extensions since 2016, in Cyrillic and Greek script.

EURid is also an active partner of EuroDIG (European Dialogue on Internet Governance), which it provides with voluntary financial contributions. Moreover, since 2007 EURid has supported the European Summer School on Internet Governance, which was set up to give students, academics and those working in government or the private sector a comprehensive understanding of the issues surrounding global internet governance.

Of course, it's not enough just to focus on the present – many of the issues relating to internet governance and cybersecurity are only going to grow in importance over the next few decades as the global digital transformation advances. With that in mind, many of EURid's initiatives are aimed specifically at giving the younger generation – perhaps the greatest stakeholders of all – the tools they need to navigate the digital landscape.

We are therefore collaborating with the Youth IGF, a network of young representatives of countries around the world that serves as a forum for the discussion of issues related to internet governance. And, in 2020 we put in place EURid's own Youth Committee, which is comprised of qualified and highly skilled representatives of the younger generation, who advise on relevant EURid projects and activities and act as EURid ambassadors in various capacities.

It is also vital that Europe's youngsters are aware of online risks and threats, and with this in mind, EURid launched the SAFEonLINE Art Competition in 2019. SAFEonLINE is a contest in which high school students are invited to react to a cybersecurity issue in their daily life they feel strongly about – cyberbullying, phishing, online privacy, technical security, etc. – by depicting it in an original visual format. “The competition aims to raise awareness about online safety and promote responsible online behaviour among young people”, says Katarina Kletečka, Liaison Manager. “By encouraging them to explore these important themes through art, we are fostering a culture of digital citizenship and empowering the next generation to navigate the online world with confidence, respect, and resilience.”

Through the partnerships and initiatives listed above, EURid not only upholds the principles and vision of the EC's Declaration for the Future of the Internet, but strives to comply with its contractual obligations, resolving technical issues, dealing with cyberattacks and identifying the source of abusive registrations. This is a daunting challenge, but it is one that motivates us daily in our mission to ensure that internet security is safe in our hands – for the Europeans of today and for the Europeans of the future.

Testimonials

EIF (European Internet Forum) was co-founded by MEPs from different political groups in 2000, and serves as a neutral multi-stakeholder Forum to discuss digital policy under the leadership of MEPs. Their focus is on digital policy issues at the top of Europe's agenda and on emerging future trends at both European and global levels. Through a continuous programme of live debates and special projects bringing together stakeholders and featuring open and inclusive dialogue, EIF helps to create a space for greater understanding of and engagement in Europe's digital future.

EIF has over 100 members from various fields, who are leading the European and global digital transformation. The organization also works with influential institutions, organizations, and individuals, including senior officials from the European Commission, European Council Secretariat, EU Member State Permanent





The European Judicial Training Network (EJTN), an organization that promotes training and cooperation between judicial authorities across Europe. The EJTN aims to improve the quality of justice in Europe by providing training opportunities and fostering the exchange of best practices among judges, prosecutors, and other legal professionals. Their website provides information on their activities, events, and publications, as well as resources for legal professionals seeking training opportunities or looking to engage with the network.



An initiative led by the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) that aims to promote the use of foresight methods in policy-making. The initiative seeks to support all stakeholders in identifying emerging trends, challenges, and opportunities in different policy areas, and to develop innovative solutions to address them. The website provides access to various resources, including reports, case studies, and tools related to foresight and scenario planning. It also offers a platform for collaboration and knowledge exchange among foresight practitioners and policymakers.



How to create an appealing website?

When creating a website, there are several things you should consider. By considering these six factors, you can create a user-friendly and effective online presence that meets your goals and engages your audience.



1. Purpose

First and foremost, you should define the purpose of your website. Is it an online store, a blog, a portfolio, or a company website? Knowing your website's purpose will guide your design choices and content creation.



2. Audience

Determine your target audience and tailor your website's design, content, and language accordingly. Knowing your audience's needs and preferences can help you create a more engaging and relevant website.



3. User experience (UX)

UX design is critical in creating a user-friendly website. Focus on providing a clear and intuitive navigation system, fast loading times, and responsive design that works across all devices.



4. Content

High-quality and relevant content is key to keeping users engaged and attracting new visitors to your site. Ensure that your content is easy to read and includes keywords relevant to your audience.



5. Branding

Use consistent branding elements such as logo, color palette, typography, and imagery throughout your website. This helps to create a cohesive and memorable experience for your visitors.



6. Search engine optimization (SEO)

Optimize your website's structure and content for search engines to increase visibility and attract more visitors. This involves techniques such as keyword research, meta tags, and link building.

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The dots you can trust.

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