

**TELEWORK
WEEK 98**

WATCHING EUROPE WORK

Telework Week 98 paints picture of Europeans at work

The evidence of a changing workforce is all around us, but it takes a well organised event like Telework Week 98 to show us how far we've come in such a short time. The event itself gets larger and more sophisticated every year and the people and corporations it highlights represent a wider range of the human experience. Both on the web and at local venues, the event has grown from a grass roots meeting-of-the-minds to a well financed, corporate sponsored celebration that reaches tens of thousands.

This year the European Commission, France Telecom, Telecom Italia, Siemens, Cisco, Toshiba and European Telework Development hosted the event, which took place

during the first week of November.

Teleworking a priority

EU governments were also well represented, as high-ranking cabinet ministers showcased recent efforts to make telecommuting, the virtual workplace and offsite handheld communication devices common terms in today's workplace. For example, Ms. Barbara Roche, the British Minister for Small firms, Trade and Industry, plans to launch several initiatives aimed at making teleworking a priority for every business in the UK. In Italy, Portugal and Holland teleworking is making a difference in the lives of those with disabilities. In the Dutch initiative, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment has launched a targeted effort aimed at reaching those citizens who were previously excluded from the labour process. In this way, teleworking widens the labour pool, reduces government expenditures, returns skilled workers to the workforce and opens doors to those who were once locked out of the system.

This newsletter is also available on the ISPO Web:
<http://www.ispo.cec.be>

The Awards

This is the changing face of Teleworking on display at this year's awards ceremony in Brussels. The Awards, a favourite feature of Telework Week, showcased diversity and rapid growth in an emerging field being propelled by continuous advances in information and communication technologies (ICTs). In his introduction, Peter Johnston of the European Commission DG XIII, reiterated the formula for success at the heart of the Telework Week concept, when he said, "We need to learn from best practice and the European Telework Awards Ceremony enables us to learn from the best in Europe." Indeed, this year's pool of entries was both impressive and diverse. Entries from larger companies included BMW and Telecom Italia Mobile, but the smaller firms were also represented, including KITE, a small company in rural Northern Ireland. And this year, government institutions also made a strong showing, with three shortlisted entries from Germany, Spain and the UK.

The winners

In keeping with the telework theme, votes could be cast on the Awards website. This year, over 2,000 electronic votes were cast. And without further adieu... the winners are:

- Category One**
Best Contribution to European Competitiveness
First Place: Telecom Italia Mobile
- Category Two**
Best Advertising Campaign
First Place: BT
- Category Three**
Most Entrepreneurial Use of Telework
First Place: KITE
- Category Four**
Most Innovative Use of Technology
First Place: CSELT
- Category Five**
Best Public Initiative
First Place: Fueva
- Category Six**
Best Contribution to European Sustainability
First Place: THINK
- Category Seven**
Best Single Article or Programme
First Place: Teleworker Magazine

For further information on the Telework week and presentation of the awards finalists, visit:
<http://www.etw.org/contents.htm>

See page 2 for the latest publications on Teleworking.



Richard Linning,
President CERP
(European Public Relations
Confederation)

**MEETING THE
CHALLENGE OF
CHANGE: 1888-1999**

Few people today remember an Englishman by the name of Ned Ludd – the 19th Century Leicestershire workman who went around destroying the new industrial machinery, which was being introduced into the textile mills of his day. His name lives on in the word Luddite that is used to describe any opponent of innovation. In Ned Ludd's day the benefits of the new industrial society were already becoming apparent: freedom from dull repetitive tasks, a better environment at work and at home, higher productivity and more time for leisure. Sounds familiar?

If Ludd's response to change sounds too extreme for today's modern society, consider the recent event in Belgium, where masked men armed with baseball bats smashed up computers installed to track sales in a large chain of supermarkets and automatically re-order replacement stock. These modern day Belgian Luddites also have an opposition to change, but they share a feeling that many of us experience – a condition called 'change fatigue'. Many people just can't cope, or don't want to keep up with change. Nor is progress always welcome. H. H. Bliss for example probably wished the motorcar had never been invented: in 1899 he was the first pedestrian killed by one.

But this accelerating rate of change is not exclusive to the 1980s or even the 90s. Dramatic changes and choices in telecommunications started accelerating in 1962, when AT&T launched Telstar, the first communications satellite. The personal computer was made possible by Intel's second-generation microprocessor in 1974. Or the seeds of the Internet, which were sown 30 years ago when the 'ARPAnet' linked scientists at four US universities.

The challenge that we face in meeting the rapid changes brought on by the Information Society is the next step. Certainly this is a faster and more dramatic shift than past changes, which means that the public must be informed clearly of the benefits that they can reap from this new organisation of work and life. So it is appropriate that public relations practitioners take up this challenge to communicate the benefits of the Information Society to the European Public – through an event such as the 'CERP communications challenge'.

Continued on page 3.

TELEWORK PUBLICATIONS

TELEWORK ENTERS THE MAINSTREAM

2.5% of Europeans are teleworkers

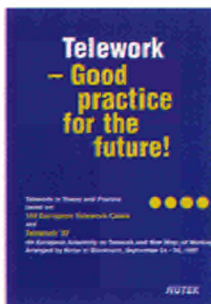
Teleworking is coming out of the closet, according to the most recent figures released by European Commission. Today some four million people across the European Union – that's 2 percent of the total workforce – are working in this new way. This is twice the number of people involved in teleworking one year ago. Even more significant is the fact that telework is no longer perceived by those involved as a 'special work status', but as a normal way of working – signalling its entry into the mainstream.



These observations and a comprehensive body of information on the state of teleworking in the EU today have been published in the annual Telework Status Report that highlights efforts made through various European initiatives – such as the Structural Funds, Trans European Networks, and EU Research Programmes.

To obtain a copy of the Status Report, point your browser to <http://www.eto.org.uk/twork/tw98/index.htm> or contact:
 European Commission, ACTS Central Office:
 Tel: +32 2 2963415
 Fax: +32 2 295 06 54
 e-mail: ACO@bxl.dg13.cec.be

A further body of useful information is contained in the publication that documents the discussions at the Annual European Assembly on New Ways to Work, held in Stockholm last year. This publication gives a wealth of practical information, including a chapter entitled "European Top 100 Telework Cases".



Contact: NUTEK
 (ref. Info no 032-98)
 Tel +46 8 681 91 00
 Fax: +46 8 19 68 26

Implementing Telework, a CD-ROM recently published by the MIRTI project of the European Commission's Telematics Application Programme examines the Telework from the Industrial relations perspective. It outlines 27 collective agreements recently achieved on teleworking, offers 14 case studies and gives practical advice such as checklists and recommendations for implementing telework, and other useful tips. This information has been specially prepared for national and local government bodies, employers, employees and their representatives, community organisations and the self-employed. ■

www.telework.mirti.org
 e-mail: iessae@uni.net

SUCCESS STORY

HOW EURES LINKS BUSINESS AND LABOUR

Information Society Service creates new cross-border job market

Some people's vision of a useful Information Society services might be a skilled tradesman walking into a high street 'employment shop' in Stoke on Trent, and securing a year's contract on a major construction project in 1,500 kilometres away in Berlin.

Fiction? Certainly not! Thousands of skilled European tradesmen and professionals are finding jobs in other countries today through the EURES network. This is an information service created with European Union funding to make cross-border employment a reality for workers of all skill levels.

The EUROpean Employment Services (EURES) is a unique co-operative network designed to improve the mobility of European workers. Much more than a database or Internet site, EURES goes beyond the usual protocol of listings and categories. Made possible by advances in Information and Communications Technology, EURES remains surprisingly human at its core. This is because a staff of 500 'Euroadvisers', located throughout the European Economic Area (EEA), combine information with guidance and placement advice to help both job seekers and employers interested in the international job market.

More than a job service

The advisors start from a technical base. Using a database that is specifically designed to connect mobile workers from across Europe, with employers seeking non-nationals. In the 3 years since its inception, the network and the experience level of advisors have grown considerably, allowing coverage of a wider geographic area and more types of jobs. But EURES is more than a job service linking work with worker. Advisors also use the system to provide their clients with useful details on working conditions, living situations and financial matters in other countries. This may sound straightforward, but historically – with a different set of administrative rules in each European country – these are precisely the issues that become obstacles for employees seeking work in another country. Using EURES as an Information Society tool, the Euradvisors are changing the

way people think about work, clearing many of the traditional barriers hindering easy mobility and creating new cross border partnerships.

EURES achievements

And it's working. The European Commission has recently adopted a report highlighting EURES achievements. The report shows that EURES was instrumental in the recruitment and placement of over 1 million workers from 1996-1997, twice the number reached during a similar period in 1994 and 1995. The success of EURES was noted by Social Affairs Commissioner Padraig Flynn, during a speech at a Social Policy Forum in Brussels. "When I launched EURES three and a half years ago, I said that I believed it had great potential. I underestimated it. The last few years have seen EURES take off. In greatly facilitating freedom of movement, EURES has played an important role in our employment strategy."

The health sector, information technology and the tourism industry, logically seem to benefit most from the success... but the Commission also noted advances in non-traditional jobs, as areas previously not known for cross-border co-operation begin to show increased mobility. EURES role has also become more balanced over the past 2 years, as co-operation with employers has become a higher priority. In fact, the number of jobs available on a daily basis fluctuates between 50,000 and 100,000.

Long term Internet focus

But EURES is still looking to improve. British Prime Minister Tony Blair and European Commission President Jacques Santer recently launched the EURES Internet site. A highly interactive site already lists 10,000 jobs, information on working and living conditions, links to national Public Employment Services Internet sites and strategies for linking employees and employers. And this is just the start of a long term Internet focus. Future prospects also include implementing a strategy for correcting labour market imbalances and increasing the skills of the average worker. It has long been a goal of the Commission and the Public Employment Services to provide a link between business and labour... a link that benefits both. EURES is making that a reality. ■

EURES was initially created as a project under the European Union programme for the Interchange of Data between Administrations (IDA).

For more information on EURES see: <http://europa.eu.int/jobs/eures>

IDA: <http://www.ispo.cec.be/ida>





SUCCESS STORY

COMPUTER USERS TAKE DRIVING TEST

Computer skill cards chart individual performance

Doctors, plumbers, even barbers require a license. So why not computer users. Employers looking for a few good employees, customers in need of advice, even students in search of a mentor have all echoed the same complaint, "How do I know who can help me?" It was that simple call for clarification that led CEPIS (Council of European Professional Informatics Societies) to develop a standard for computer competency. The result is The European Computer Driver's License (ECDL), which establishes standards for both the casual and the professional computer user. But the main aim of the program is to test and certify, making it easy for employers across Europe to identify those individuals who are capable of performing a wide-range of real-life, commonly needed workplace computer skills. In the end, it must be a certificate that acknowledges a personal level of competency based on an industry accepted, pan-European standard. Toward that end, users are tested in 7 categories:

- Basic IT
- Computer Use and File Management
- Spreadsheets
- Word Processing
- Databases
- Presentation and Drawing
- Information Network Services.

The tests are controlled and administered by each country, but there is only one standard and one simple process. When students prove competency in a particular area, it is noted on their skill card. When they reach competency in all 7 areas, they trade in their skills card for a Computer Driver's License and the opportunity to pursue work across the Community. So, are you looking for a job, thinking of test driving a new PC or simply going for a spin on the Information Super Highway? Either way, don't forget your European Computer Driving Licence. ■

Information about the ECDL can be found at: www.cs.tcd.ie/ECDL/

IRISI ISSUES REPORT ON LESSONS LEARNT

Inter-Regional Information Society Initiative (IRISI) Network

Launched in 1994, IRISI was established to examine how Information Strategies could accelerate economic and social development in six European regions that are traditionally lagging behind: Central Macedonia (Greece), Nord Pas de Calais (France), Northwest England (UK), Piemonte (Italy), Saxony (Germany) and Valencia (Spain).

The initiative focused on the need for the regions to become part of the Information Society by establishing partnerships with regional players and by providing a platform for inter-regional exchange of experience.. All IRISI Initiatives have successfully applied the same innovative methodology, by following a strategic, bottom-up, inclusive and integrative approach. They all managed to raise the level of awareness and to create consensus between, and commitment of, key regional players around a Regional Information Society Strategy and Action Plan, which eventually was instrumental to benefit from Structural Funds support.

The experience and the lessons learned from this experimental pilot action have been summarised in the new publication. This publication provides two perspectives: the first, of observant participation, from the IRISI Network which collated, analysed and synthesised the work of the regional initiatives; the second, of participant observation, from a team of external evaluators.

Both perspectives were designed with a view to learning whether and how regions might use the Information Society as a new paradigm for regional regeneration and development. The publication is accompanied by a CD-ROM which contains many of the basic documents as well as accompanying reports produced in the context of the IRISI Initiative. ■

For further information on the follow up of the IRISI approach, or for ordering copies of this publication, please contact:
Mr. Luis Lozano,
European Commission, DG XIII,
Fax: +32 2 2969131
e-mail: luis.lozano@bxl.dg13.cec.be



PUBLICATIONS

MEDICAL INFORMATION JUST GOT EASIER

New reference book promotes telemedicine

Telematics has been at the forefront of innovative medical care for over a decade. But the fast-changing, rapidly evolving technology upon which it is based remains elusive for many practitioners and administrators.

A new book from the European Health Telematics Observatory and The British Royal Society of Medicine is helping to change that. "European Telemedicine 99" provides practical solutions based on case studies, as well as the latest theory on newly emerging applications and advanced technologies.

The book also serves to highlight the dissemination of health telematics applications and standards. It gives an overview of EU-funded telemedicine projects. There are also sections on the legal, educational and component aspects of telemedicine.

In the past, too little information has been available about the impact of health telematics on society, "European Telemedicine 99" fills that void.

And it is clear, as technology makes the world smaller, it lengthens the reach and power of medicine. ■

For more information, contact the European Health Telematics Observatory at: www.ehto.be/ehto or e-mail Ms. Maria Laires: maria.laires@ehto.org

Meeting the challenge of change: 1888-1999 continued from page 1.

The challenge invites students to create a public relations programme to inform European consumers about the Information Society, and to motivate Europeans to take advantage of these benefits themselves. By presenting the innovative ideas of tomorrow's European public affairs leaders, the CERP challenge can help convince the Information Society Luddites that this is one high speed train that they should be jumping on board. ■

COMMUNICATING THE BENEFITS OF THE INFORMATION SOCIETY

The CERP challenge invites students in public affairs to propose an illustrated public relations programme that informs European consumers about the Information Society, and to motivate people in all age groups to be more comfortable in taking advantage of the benefits of the Information Society. The Challenge is open to all institutions in Europe that have a full-time course in public relations. Entrants are free to select their own target audience, provided it has an international scope. ■

Contact: Richard Linning, CERP
Tel: +32 2 7620485,
Fax: +32 2 771 1959,
e-mail: rlinning@prp.be



EVENTS UPDATE

OECD MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON E-COMMERCE

The Commission, led by Commissioner Martin Bangemann and representatives from DGs I, III, XIII, XV, XXI and XXIV, participated in the OECD Ministerial level conference in Ottawa, Canada, 7-9 October. The conference followed several earlier initiatives taken by the OECD and the Commission to develop a common approach to the evolution of e-commerce as a key tool for trade and commerce around the world. The OECD Ministers approved an Action Plan and several declarations – on consumer protection, privacy and authentication and on taxation – outlining the work to be undertaken by the OECD and other international organizations to facilitate the effective, secure and easily accessible application of e-commerce in world-wide trade and commerce. To take advantage of this international gathering (800 or more delegates including ministers and officials, as well as business

Commissioner Bangemann (second from left) visiting the European Commission stand at the OECD conference on Electronic Commerce in Ottawa.

representatives, from the 29 OECD member states and the European Commission) the Ottawa Delegation organized a booth at the e-commerce showcase. The showcase represented the efforts primarily of the private sector but also of governments to introduce new services, technologies and applications of e-commerce to the global community represented by the 800 or more delegates while the booth highlighted the Commission's role in the development of programs and policies in support of e-commerce. It was also represented in a joint exhibit together with Industry Canada, describing the work being undertaken by the EU and Canada in the Global Inventory Project. The Commission was thus able to demonstrate in a tangible way its important role in the evolution of e-commerce, not only in the EU but world-wide. ■

For more information, contact: patrice.husson@cec.be

EVENTS UPDATE

FINLAND: EUROPE'S IS LABORATORY

The role of citizens in a technology-driven world

Finland will host the 2nd Annual International Congress on Media & Citizenship in an Information Society, 6-9 January, 1999. This unique conference will examine how living in an Information Society can affect quality of life and the exercise of power... From politics to employment and housing to recreation, some of Europe's leading thinkers will contribute to the Finnish IT experiment. Advanced Information Technologies, including the Internet and multimedia are becoming a part of daily life, especially in Finland, where more people per capita subscribe to cell phones and on-line services. The conference, hosted by SITRA (Finnish National Fund for Research and Development) and the Parliament of Finland, challenges participants to consider technology in the

context of human innovation and the political process. Antti Hautamaki, Director of Research at SITRA, frames the challenge of the congress quite succinctly, "Will IT raise the quality of life... or will it lead to unemployment, alienation and a technosystem no longer under human control". To explore these issues and many more, plan on a midwinter excursion to the warmly welcoming northern environs and witness firsthand the Nordic perspective on IT and how it can play a positive role in society. ■

To obtain a copy of the program, send e-mail to: secretariat@congcreator.com. An exhibition will also be held during the congress. Exhibitors include financial service organisations, service solution suppliers, software and hardware vendors and IT providers.

For more information, point your browser to: www.kolumbus.fi/pi99

Further contact details: see calendar.

Information Society News

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CALENDAR

Technologies et organisation flexible : des défis pour l'emploi

14 December 1998
Louvain-la-Neuve (B)
Fondation Travail-Université
Tel: +32 81 725122
Fax: +32 81 725128
e-mail: pvendramin@compuserve.com

2nd International Congress on Electronic Media & Citizenship

6-9 January 1999
Espoo, Jyväskylä, Oulu and Tampere (FI)
Finnish National Fund for Research and Development (SITRA) on the initiative of the Committee for the Future of the Finnish Parliament
Contact: CongCreator CC
Tel: +358 9 440 822
Fax: +358 9 492 810
e-mail: secretariat@congcreator.com
www.kolumbus.fi/pi99
(see article on this page)

Envisioning Knowledge – The knowledge society and the new media

3-4 February 1999
Munich (D)
Burda Akademie zum Dritten Jahrtausend
Tel: +49 89 9250 3559
Fax: +49 89 9250 3464
e-mail: akademie3000@burda.com
www.akademie3000.de

LEARNTEC 99- Multimedia education and learning

9-11 February 1999
Karlsruhe (D)
Tel: +49 721 37 200
Fax: +49 721 372 0106
e-mail: info@kka.de

Information Society Technologies (IST) Programme Information Day

15 February 1999
Paris (F)
European Commission, DG XIII
IST Info Desk
Tel: +32 2 2968388
e-mail: ist@cec.be
<http://www.cordis.lu/ist/infoday.htm>

Euromedia '99

25-28 April 1999
Munich (D)
SCS-Europe
Tel: +32 9 2234941
e-mail: philippe.geril@rug.ac.be

IS&N '99 Sixth International Conference on Intelligence in Services and Networks

27-29 April 1999
Barcelona (E)
Tel: +34 93 4016814
Fax: +34 93 4017055
e-mail: isn99@ac.upc.es
www.ac.upc.es/isn99/

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Free phone service

Austria	0660 5835
Belgium	0800 13891
Denmark	800 1 8888
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Sweden	020 791635
United Kingdom	0800 962114

Payphone: +32 2 2968800
or +32 2 2968900

Fax: +32 2 2994170
or +32 2 2994180

e-mail: ispo@ispo.cec.be

World Wide Web: <http://www.ispo.cec.be>

Mail: Information Society Project Office
BU 24 0/74, rue de la Loi 200,
B-1049 Brussels