

# Answer to the European Commission public consultation on the early challenges regarding the "Internet of Things"

Please indicate your preference (use a X):

- I agree that this document is made public  
 I want this document **not to** be made public

If you reply on your own behalf, please indicate:

- Name: [Douglas Reay](#)
- Telephone: [+44 77 3 99 888 11](#)
- Email: [Douglas.Reay@Gmail.Com](mailto:Douglas.Reay@Gmail.Com)
- Country of residence: [United Kingdom](#)

If you are replying on behalf of an organisation, please indicate:

- The organisation's name:
- The type of organisation:
  - private company
  - government/public body/international organisation
  - academic/research institution
  - non governmental organisation
  - other:
- Your organisation details
  - o location:
  - o size:
  - o scope of activities (max 3 sentences):
  - o website:
- Contact person:
- Contact person' telephone:
- Contact person's email:

Please start replying on the next page

The main impact of 'the Internet of Things' is not that it will let mobile devices interact with each other, but in the new ways that it will facilitate mobile people interacting with each other, through their devices.

The participativeness that marked Web 2.0 will progress to include ad-hoc social networking based on an intersection of location and interests.

**Use Case :** Bob is standing in a long taxi queue outside a railway station. Can his device find for him someone willing to share a taxi going in his direction?

**Use Case :** Alice is sees someone interesting at a nightclub, but is too shy to go straight up to him. Can she find out if they share any interests, or if he is known by any of her friends, and what they think of him? Will a phone camera snap of him let a search engine find matching pictures to identify his blog or web profile page? Could she set her device to notify her if someone matching her interest criteria walked into a bookshop or cafe she was at:?

**Use Case :** Eve is on her way to a business meeting with clients. Can her mobile device notify her of late additions to the agenda and help her edit the presentation collaboratively with the rest of her team?

**Use Case :** Dave is hitchhiking across Asia. Can he get real-time translation? Can he find locals and other hitchhikers in his area interested in interacting with him ? Can he read the digital graffiti left on a GPS matched virtual Earth, and can he read only the comments by those who meet his criteria for who is trustworthy?

These new capabilities will provide challenges in several areas. The social issue is how we deal with a changing expectation of how much privacy is afforded by anonymity in public spaces. The technical and business issue is whether a user's online identity and social network data remains under the control of companies who use proprietary non-transferrable formats to gain a network effect lock-in, or whether the users gain ownership and control of which services they use and who they trust.

The legislative issue will be how best to balance companies who will claim they need a free hand to remain competitive (and who can point to a track record to back this claim up) and concerned social groups who will claim that these new technologies are powerful, potentially dangerously intrusive, and need to be put under state regulation (and who will be able to point to quite real, if small, emotionally powerful examples of it having negative effects, probably including pedophiles stalking children, advertisers manipulating customers and government agencies abusing powers granted to track terror threats).

No course will satisfy everyone, but the least satisfactory course will be one that veers from side to side, blown by scandals and daily political pressures. A body needs to be set up, similar to the Warnock Committee in the UK, that can take testimony and present a considered report about the ethical issues looming over the horizon, with potentially an ongoing advisory or oversight role to keep legislation consistent and forward looking.