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Digital Single Market

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--- Posted by [Fabio Colasanti](#) ^[1], session moderator and President, [International Institute of Communications](#). ^[2]

On 27-28 February 2012 the Danish Presidency of the European Union is hosting a [High Level Conference on the Digital Single Market](#) ^[3] in Copenhagen. One of the conference sessions, the one that I am moderating, will focus on how to improve that all important trust in the almost endless possibilities of the Internet - at the benefit of citizens and the public sector, consumers and business alike.

Everybody reading this blog will probably be used to buying products and services on-line, such as books and DVD's ; airlines tickets; hotels, rental cars, and so on. Most of "us", with an interest in Information and Communication Technologies, would consider this a normal occurrence and would miss it greatly if it ceased to exist.



^[4]Yet the figures tell us that in Europe, e-commerce represents just over three per cent of retail sales and that its cross border dimension is tiny. There are many reasons for this. Other parts of the world, e.g. North America, have a more developed tradition of postal sales and have developed a remarkable logistics sector. In addition, differences in legal systems, payments facilities and languages complicate trans-border transactions. Many on-line offers are restricted to the home country or to a group of countries.

In general, many potential customers are uncomfortable with buying on-line. This includes many

people who do use the internet, but for other reasons; they do not "trust" the e-commerce offers available. This session will be dedicated to exploring how to create this missing trust.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that Europeans view the internet as a possible source of danger more so than Americans or Asians. It is therefore crucial to find ways of reassuring customers that fraud and other misuses only affect a tiny fraction of online shoppers. Users must know that they have easy access to forms of redress. We must also remember that e-commerce is a sector largely in its infancy. Thus, it is equally crucial not to increase concerns by introducing measures that may stifle innovation or disproportionately impact upon small firms.

To discuss these issues, the session brings together policy makers: Mr [Harrie Temmink](#) [5] from the European Commission; and Mr Daniel Pataki, Director of [Etno](#) [6]; consumer representatives: Mr [Paolo Balboni](#) [7] of the [European Privacy Association](#) [8] and Mr Rasmus Kjeldahl of the [Danish Consumer Council](#) [9]; and a representative from those offering e-commerce solutions.

You can follow the discussions on twitter at [#dsm12](#) [10]. For the full programme, please visit the [conference website](#) [11] I hope you will feel inspired and contribute to the discussion by commenting below, and vote on the contributions of others. The contributions receiving the most votes will be presented and discussed in Copenhagen.

Source picture: European Parliament.

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[2] <http://iicom.org/>

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[4] <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/sites/digital-agenda/files/digital-agenda/files/2012/02/Colasanti.jpg>

[5] <http://www.law.kuleuven.be/meel/faculty/Temmink>

[6] <http://www.etno.be/>

[7] <http://www.paolobalboni.eu/>

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