Digital Single Market

Press release27 May 2008

An unlimited source of Internet addresses to be on stream in Europe by 2010

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Increasing demand for Internet based services means that there would not be enough addresses to support this expected growth, if no action is taken. Encouraging internet users and providers to adopt the latest Internet Protocol (IP version 6 or IPv6) will provide a massive increase in address space, much in the same way as telephone numbers were lengthened in the 20th century. The European Commission today set Europe a target of getting 25% of EU industry, public authorities and households to use IPv6 by 2010, calling for concerted action at European level to get all actors prepared for a timely, efficient change to avoid extra costs for consumers and give innovative European companies a competitive advantage.

"This is very much a case of a stitch in time saves nine", said Viviane Reding, EU Commissioner for Information Society and Media. "In the short term, businesses and public authorities might be tempted to try to squeeze their needs into the strait jacket of the old system, but this would mean Europe is badly placed to take advantage of the latest internet technology, and could face a crisis when the old system runs out of addresses. IPv6 provides more addresses in cyberspace than there are grains of sand on the world's beaches. If Europeans are to use the latest internet devices such as smart tags in shops, factories and airports, intelligent heating and lighting systems that save energy, and in-car networks and navigation systems, then we already face a thousand-fold increase in demand for IP addresses. I call on Member States to make sure that public authorities and industry have IPv6 widely sown up by 2010."

Full press release [1]

"Advancing the Internet - Action Plan for the deployment of Internet Protocol version 6 (IPv6) in Europe" [2] (Full text of the Communication - .pdf)

Factsheet on IPv6 [3]

IPv6 website [4]

EUROPEAN IPv6 Day [5] (Brussels, 30 May 2008)

IPv6 animation [6] (Media Player format)

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