arcep
autorité de régulation
des communications électroniques
et des postes

RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE

Press release

Data-driven regulation

Arcep publishes a draft decision for public consultation on an API to be installed in operators' boxes to improve the ability to measure fixed internet QoS

Paris, 23 April 2019

Measuring the quality of fixed internet services is a particularly complex affair: it is virtually impossible today, from a technical standpoint, for an internet speed test to determine with absolute certainty the access technology (copper, cable, fibre, etc.) being used on the tested line. This missing detail in the testing process makes it difficult to utilise the resulting data and, in some cases, can mislead consumers.

"Access ID card" API: a co-construction approach to characterise the user environment

In early 2018, Arcep began a wide-ranging initiative that called upon all of the market's stakeholders to help solve this major problem. This co-construction[1] approach initiated by Arcep involves some 20 players, including crowdsourcing measurement sites, operators and academia. The ecosystem reached a consensus on the implementation of an Application Programming Interface (API) that would be installed directly on operators' boxes, and could be accessed by tools that comply with the Code of Conduct that Arcep published last year[2].

This API would enable the transmission of information that can be likened to an "access ID card," such as the access technology being used but also, for instance, the consumer's headline speed, the quality of the Wi-Fi connection, etc. No identifying information (user ID, name, location, etc.) on the consumer would be transmitted, however, thereby ensuring that users' privacy is fully protected.

A draft decision to create a framework for implementing the API

Contributions from the different stakeholders helped produce detailed specifications on how this API would work. After a lengthy series of exchanges with the ecosystem, today Arcep is publishing a draft decision for public consultation on implementing this API in operators' boxes.

The purpose of this public consultation is to obtain stakeholders' reactions to this draft decision, and particularly regarding:

- the scope of the operators and the boxes that would be affected by the API's implementation;
- the parameters the API would transmit;
- the API implementation and access restriction rules;
- the implementation timetable.

This is a global first for an initiative of this kind. Arcep is open to all and any suggestions on how to improve the mechanism for characterising the user environment, and invites the sector's stakeholders to share their feedback through this public consultation. Contributions must reach Arcep by 27 May 2019.

Associated document:

The public consultation

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[1] 2018 edition of the report on the State of the Internet in France : description of the API co-construction process
[2] 2018 edition of the quality of service Code of conducts

Arcep at a glance

The Electronic Communications and Postal Regulatory Authority (ARCEP), a neutral and expert arbitrator with the status of independent administrative authority, is the architect and guardian of internet, fixed and mobile telecoms and postal networks in France.