Press release

OPEN INTERNET

Arcep publishes the 2021 edition of its report on the State of the Internet in France

Paris, 7 July 2021

Arcep has published the 2021 edition of its report on the State of the Internet in France, submitted to Parliament and presented today at an online press conference. In this report, Arcep analyses the impact that the Covid-19 crisis has had on the networks and, as it does every year, examines the outstanding developments on fixed and mobile internet networks' different components during the year gone by: namely quality of service, data interconnection, the transition to IPv6, net neutrality, the role of platforms and the digital environmental footprint.

The Covid-19 crisis: how the first lockdown affected networks, and lessons learned

In its report, Arcep examines the impact of last year's events on the networks, especially during the first lockdown in spring 2020, and the main lessons drawn from the Covid-19 crisis.

Despite a huge spike in voice calling and internet use, fixed and mobile networks did not suffer any major congestion. The Open Internet regulation in fact proved its ability to apply under any circumstance. It was the ecosystem's stakeholders' (operators, content and application providers, users and public institutions) exceptional mobilisation that ensured the networks continued to operate in a neutral and uninterrupted fashion throughout the public health crisis.

Internet quality of service: five new undertakings involved in QoS testing declared themselves compliant with Arcep's Code of conduct in 2020

To improve both how fixed network quality of service is measured, and the information made available to users, Arcep has been working since 2018 with the different players involved in testing QoS: crowdsourcing tools, operators, consumer protection associations, academics). This work culminated in the creation of an "Access ID Card" API for implementation by operators, to provide crowdsourcing tools with a more detailed characterisation of the testing environment. Operators will begin deploying the API in July 2021. This will, in turn, provide users with clear and reliable information that will allow them to make informed choices about their internet access technology and ISP.

Arcep also published a Code of conduct to encourage players involved in testing QoS to guarantee a minimum level of transparency and robustness, both for their test protocols and in the presentation of their findings. A new version of the Code was published in 2020[1]. Ten players involved in QoS testing have now declared themselves compliant with the Code of conduct, including five new ones in 2020. This will make it easier to compare the data published by these players.

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[1] The 2020 version of the Code of conduct: https://www.arcep.fr/uploads/tx_gspublication/code-de-conduite-QoS-internet-2020_sept2020.pdf

Data interconnection: incoming traffic increased by more than 50% in one year

Every year, Arcep publishes its Barometer of data interconnection in France, to coincide with the publication of its annual report on the State of the Internet in France. Today, it is posting data as of the end of December 2020 on the French population's use of digital services during the successive lockdowns last year. Among the findings: incoming traffic to the main ISPs in France increased by more than 50% over the previous year, to reach 27.7 Tbit/s at the end of 2020. Traffic from the main ISPs' on-net CDN in France increased by 82% YoY, to reach 7.1 Tbit/s.

Transition to IPv6: the task force continues to work on accelerating the transition

In its report, Arcep also revisits its first handbook called "Enterprises: why switch to IPv6?" – produced by the IPv6 task force created by Arcep and Internet Society France, and which is open to every ecosystem stakeholder. Join the task force to contribute to the production of the next handbook: "How to deploy IPv6".

Guaranteeing an open internet: Arcep releases a new version of the Wehe app, a tool for verifying net neutrality compliance

Arcep has made a tool called Wehe available to users since 2018, allowing them to verify online services' compliance with net neutrality rules. A new version of the Wehe app was developed in 2020 which delivers the ability to test new services and detect port blocking. Wehe is currently available for free in French, for Android, iOS and more recently F-Droid devices.

Regulating platforms: Arcep publishes several proposals to strengthen the *Digital Markets Act*

Located at one end of the internet access chain, devices (smartphones, voice assistants, connected cars…) along with "gatekeeper" platforms' closed ecosystems have proven to be weak links in achieving an open internet. This is why the European Commission opened up a new stage in digital market regulation in 2020, publishing two proposed regulations: the *Digital Services Act* and the *Digital Markets Act*. Arcep welcomes the proposed *Digital Markets Act* which plans on introducing *ex ante* economic regulation of the largest digital industry players, aka the internet's gatekeepers. In its report on the State of the Internet in France, it lays out several of the proposals it has made to strengthen this new regulation.

Associated documents:

- Report on the State of the Internet in France – 2021 Edition (in French; English version to come)

- Presentation of the 2021 report on the State of the Internet in France, given at the online press conference

- Report highlights

- The 2021 edition of the Data Interconnection Barometer

- IPv6 statistics, on the top 100 countries with the most Internet users

Arcep at a glance

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