Arcep gives the internet in France in 2018 a complete check-up

Arcep is publishing its report on the state of the internet in France: a detailed examination to identify the risks, remedies, shock therapies and preventive medicine to be employed. Each internet component needs its own prescription!

1. QUALITY OF SERVICE

To improve quality of service on the internet, we need to be able to measure it correctly. But the comparison tools available today deliver such disparate results that it’s no wonder users don’t know which way to turn. It’s impossible for them to use performance as a real criterion when choosing their access provider.

To “fine tune the scanner,” increase its accuracy, transparency and clarity. Arcep called on all of the web testing ecosystem’s players and began a co-construction process. The goal: to publish a common code of conduct and develop an API that contains each device’s “access ID card”.

2. INTERCONNECTION

Interconnection enables all networks to talk to each other, and appear to us as a single network. But when two players do not agree on their interconnection, the quality of the user experience is threatened. Which is why Arcep keeps a close watch over the market: in late 2017, its information gathering process was further enhanced to take interconnection players’ changing behaviour into account. Once consolidated, the results will be published in a dedicated annual scorecard, before the end of 2018.

3. THE TRANSITION TO IPv6

The ongoing proliferation of connected products will drain the available stock of IPv4 addresses by 2021. Any delay in France’s transition to IPv6 will erect a significant barrier to entry for market newcomers, and would split the internet’s development in two – with IPv4 on the one side and IPv6 on the other – severely hampering businesses’ ability to compete. Arcep is publishing a scorecard to galvanise the ecosystem: for instance, only two of the top four ISPs have a substantial number of activated IPv6 customers. Arcep will be hosting several “IPv6” workshops to give market players involved in the transition a chance to share their experiences.

4. NET NEUTRALITY

In late 2017, the United States challenged the idea of protecting net neutrality. In Europe, in the interests of freedom of information, freedom of expression and freedom of enterprise, Arcep and its counterparts continue to implement the Open Internet regulation.

France is reaping the benefits of the proactive dialogue that it began with stakeholders in 2016, while working to ensure the ecosystem keeps its eye on the ball, and access providers adjust their behaviour, through case-by-case analysis. Launched in 2017, the “J’alerte l’Arcep” user reporting platform uses crowdsourcing to keep the regulator informed. Arcep is also contributing to the development of traffic management detection tools.

5. HOW DEVICES INFLUENCE INTERNET OPENNESS

With the introduction of European net neutrality regulation, Arcep can enforce it on the networks, but there is a weak link at the end of the chain: devices. Smartphones, voice assistants, tablets… all restrict internet openness and lock users’ into their operating systems, their browsers and their app stores.

A series of meetings and workshops helped achieve a detailed analysis of these findings, and in mapping out very concrete courses of action, from improving transparency to having the regulator take direct action.