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| 32nd Meeting ECC SG | |  | |
| Maisins Alfort, 13th February 2013 | |  | |
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| Summary: | | | |
| This paper makes proposals for a more frequent publication of information about ECC activity. This is consistent with the approach agreed at the last Steering Group meeting, but additional to the earlier specific proposal for a monthly or more frequent news release. It is now proposed also to post a factual monthly bulletin of key activity on the website, and to introduce the use of ‘Twitter’. | | | |
| Proposal: | | | |
| * The ECC Steering Group is asked to note, and comment as necessary, on the Office's proposals for a monthly news bulletin, described in this document. * The ECC SG is also asked to comment on the Office’s proposals for the use of Twitter, which are set out in Annex 1 to this document. * Annex 2 is a proposal for the spring edition of the ECC Newsletter, for which SG endorsement is sought. | | | |
| Background: | | | |
| The Office provides a communications function to the ECC, which is supervised by the ECC SG.  The October 2012 meeting of the Steering Group endorsed the office's proposals for further development of the ECC's communications programme. This included a more frequent distribution of news about the ECC's activities. | | | |

**Monthly bulletin**

The Office proposes to produce a factual monthly bulletin listing the Working Group and Project Team meetings which have taken place, noting the agreed outcomes, next steps and factual (as opposed to more descriptive) context. The bulletin should also list the consultations which have been launched and closed over the period. The bulletin may also include a short overall summary drawing attention to a small number of highlights.

The bulletin will need to be have only a very few words per item, in order to keep each issue to a manageable length. One of the purposes of the bulletin will be to invite more visits to the relevant group pages on the website, where further details are already available and maintained in an existing framework. Over time, there would be benefit in achieving a more consistent underlying style to the website group pages, although the different nature of the groups also needs to be reflected.

The bulletin’s content would be drawn from the contributions of the office’s experts attending (or having remote responsibility for) the various meetings. In order to produce the document without significantly increasing the demands on the Office’s experts, the reporting to the monthly bulletin will need to be integrated with a slightly reformatted form of internal reporting within the Office.

In order to avoid over-burdening its members, the Office does not propose routinely to consult the ECC SG on the whole content of the bulletin, as it should be factual in nature. Of course, the normal consultations between experts and chairman in relation to website content should also cover the bulletin in cases of any uncertainty (‘if in doubt, ask’). Also, a short checking consultation (say, 24 hours) could, and probably should, be included on any overall summary at the top of the bulletin, before publication.

The Office intends to run an internal pilot scheme for February or March, inviting comments on the overall approach from the Steering Group. Thereafter we would hope to start regular bulletins in the following month, with further adjustments over time in the light of experience and feedback from the SG.

**Use of Twitter**

Annex 1 to this document sets out a rationale and strategy for engaging with the Twitter social network. There are also some outline operational considerations, although this would need to be developed in more detail before any deployment.

The ECC Chairman has expressed an interest to the Office in the use of Twitter within the ECC’s communications activities. The Office shares that interest, prompted particularly by the understanding that media journalists (including in the specialist press) increasingly turn to Twitter as a source of information (this is based on anecdotal rather than systematic evidence). It seems that Twitter is used by journalists as a signpost to levels of activity and their subject areas as much as for short elements of substantive information.

In many respects, Twitter is designed to offer a more interactive form of dialogue with a stakeholder community. This provides opportunities for the ECC, but also some risks, and draws it into an area where its resource constraints may limit the ECC’s ability to exploit this characteristic. The document at Annex 1 seeks to address the tension between the ECC's established character of consensus and collective control, and the very spontaneous nature of Twitter.

The ECO does not recommend use of other social media such as Facebook, since the dynamics of interaction, and the user expectation, within Facebook, and of the ECC are (in the opinion of the Office Director) too different to reconcile.

**Annex 1**

**Proposed ECC engagement with ‘Twitter’**

**Introduction**

As set out in our previous communications update, the ECO is taking forward a number of initiatives this year to establish a more regular stream of news and views from the ECC. As a potentially strong two-way communications platform, Twitter could be a useful tool in support of this work for broadening stakeholder relationships and establishing a more regular flow of news from the ECC, as well as offering a new channel for stakeholders to exchange views with the organisation. However, perhaps the most persuasive reason to adopt Twitter is the recognition that news media, including the more specialist branches of media that the ECC seeks to target, has adopted Twitter as a principal source of information, even if it is more as a signpost to activity than about the substance. Therefore, it is recommended that the ECC establishes a presence on the network and this paper sets out the strategy and approach for launching and managing an ECC Twitter account.

**Objectives**

In particular, the platform could be used to:

* extend the reach of ECC news – informing stakeholders about upcoming consultations, meetings, reports, as well as offering a possibility to express some thoughts and opinions from authorised ECC/ECO experts (if a suitable framework is established);
* provide a new channel for stakeholder engagement; and
* provide a means of tracking what stakeholders are saying about common areas of interest.

**Strategy and approach**

It is important to recognise that Twitter’s design and ethos is all about listening and engaging with stakeholders and not just about tweeting organisational news. Therefore the strategy should incorporate an effective monitoring system which is flexible enough to follow conversations and respond to them in a relevant timeframe, keeping the ECC's organisational objectives in mind at all times, namely: to enhance its reputation for technical competence; to raise awareness about the impact and benefits of its work; and to achieve greater participation and collaboration with Administrations and industry.

**Implications and risk**

To take this step to using Twitter is not without some significant constraints, impact, and risks. This is largely a consequence of the ECC and ECO’s resource constraints, notably the available effort. The feasibility of introducing Twitter depends on being able to integrate it into the wider ECC communications framework which is or would be carried out in any case (see ECC SG(12)23). The Twitter habit of ‘joining a conversation’, if and when one arises will require the following consequences to be acceptable:

* that only a very limited number of ECC representatives would have the authorisation to send tweets under an ECC name, as extensive internal consultations will not be consistent with Twitter’s dynamic

that some strands of Twitter conversation may develop without an intensive ECC response (due to constraints of resource and/or time to negotiate an agreed sequence of responses)

In addition, the ECC could be open to criticism from users that believe its Twitter use is too formal or self-promoting and therefore inconsistent with the ethos of the platform. The ECO will try to mitigate this by sourcing a variety of content but the sensitivities and nature of the organisation means that such criticism may simply have to be accepted.

To help manage expectations, the ECC will publish a clear Twitter policy setting out what it will and will not be able to do. The ECO will also use holding replies where appropriate to allow time for drafting and agreeing some of the more difficult responses.

To minimise security risks, the Office will change the ECC's password regularly. It will also register all proposed names and relevant alternatives to reduce the risk of spoof accounts appearing.

As a last resort, if engagement with Twitter leads to unacceptably bad outcomes, it remains an option to withdraw from using the medium.

Resource

The ECO will be responsible for planning, operating and managing the ECC's Twitter account. A staff member, and a backup, will be responsible for the day-to-day management of the account: monitoring incoming tweets, escalating issues (negative comments, inaccuracies that need correcting) and co-ordinating replies, as necessary, within office hours. The Director and Deputy Director will be responsible for authorising qualitative replies, although purely factual replies could be delegated more widely. We do not propose to monitor outside office hours.

Subject to accepting the limitations outlined in the preceding paragraph, the resource implications to the Office of running this account are expected to be manageable, within the communications plan set out at the previous Steering Group meeting. However, the ECO will evaluate and report back to the ECC SG on the resource impact three months after launch.

It is also proposed that the ECC Chairman, ECC Vice Chairmen and ECO Director would have the authority to send Twitter messages under an ECC-based identity, revealing their own reaction to events, although always having a responsibility to respect and not to prejudice the agreed policies and activities of the ECC. The Steering Group may wish to consider whether this facility should also be extended to other SG members. The Steering Group is also invited to consider whether CPG activity, given its particular nature, should fall within or outside the scope of the Twitter facility (there would probably be a huge interest, but a much greater consequential risk).

Preparations for Twitter launch

In preparing for the ECC's launch on Twitter, the ECO will need to undertake a short but clear in-house training session on its use to ensure all relevant colleagues understand the principles and practice of use both in general, and particularly the ECC's Twitter Policy and approach.

The ECC will be accountable for everything that it tweets and the ECO's priority will be to ensure its site is used consistently and professionally to communicate its key messages and to protect its reputation. Therefore, clear procedures will be put in place to ensure all messages are signed-off appropriately.

Furthermore, the channel will be used as an extension to the ECC's website, which itself will become more active with news updates over time, and content will be co-ordinated across both platforms.

Tone of voice

From the outset, it is important to determine a tone of voice for general organisational tweets from the ECC which will largely go out unnamed.

To complement key organisational objectives to broaden stakeholder relations and encourage active participation, it is recommended that ECC tweets should be informal and friendly with a consistent and professional tone. The aim here is to create a friendly atmosphere which encourages engagement.

Tweets from specific individuals, (e.g ECC Chairman), can, up to a point, be more light-hearted, personal and conversational.

Planning content

With only 140 characters available (including spaces), tweets need to be short and snappy. However, because Twitter happens in real time and is available for all to see, care needs to be taken to ensure they fairly represent the ECC's corporate messages and objectives.

For the more important announcements, tweets should be limited to 128 characters to allow space for re-tweeting.

This paper proposes that the ECC’s use of Twitter would be driven by announcements. An approximately weekly or more frequent message should be sent, announcing: meetings, interesting decisions and topics, upcoming consultations, events and newsletter editions. All news releases, presentations, speeches, and decisions should be signposted on Twitter. In addition, pre-announcements of upcoming meetings should be made, followed by some post-meeting news and views from one of the experts, as appropriate, when the relevant group’s web-page is updated after the meeting.

Pictures should ideally be used to add interest to some posts (via twitpic.com or Flickr), although resource constraints may limit this. But ‘hashtags’ (a Twitter label to ease subsequent searches) should be included to enable other users to join a conversation and share their thoughts, where appropriate, and to search and filter content.

All tweets need to be timely with a focus on upcoming issues, meetings, events and other new news rather than a rehash of old news. (And, all links should take you to the actual content and not to the homepage. The URL can be shortened using bit.ly or tinyurl.com or one such other site.)

The ECC's communications calendar will be extended to cover Twitter announcements and any potential content will be discussed and considered at regular ECO team meetings.

Set up ECC Twitter account

Joining Twitter is very simple. All the technical information about opening an account is available from its website: [www.twitter.com](file:///C:\Users\Jeremy\Documents\Julie\www.twitter.com), together with some generic best practice guidelines, some of which apply to the ECC, and some of which do not.

The ECC ‘avatar’ displayed to users should be its logo. The account name could be: @CEPT\_ECC and the accompanying profile could simply say:

*Official Twitter channel of CEPT's ECC, responsible for harmonising the efficient use of the radio spectrum across Europe. Twitter policy: [link]*

www.cept.org/ecc

A Twitter policy needs to be written and agreed for publication on the site. A draft appears at Annex 1.

Identify relevant stakeholders

The ECC needs to engage with relevant stakeholders such as: the EC, Administrations, industry, academia, and specialist media to form online relationships as part of its Twitter launch. The ECO expects to use TweetDeck by Twitter for this purpose to categorise stakeholder groups, manage relationships and run searches. It will also note relevant hashtags to gain an understanding of how the audience connects.

This stakeholder research will be confined to key stakeholder groups; the ECO is not seeking to follow individuals. However, it is the convention to follow back anyone who follows you. This could be done through an automated service such as tweetlater.com. However, it is recommended that the ECC does not follow back automatically and instead allows the ECO to consider this on a case-by-case basis. This should be made clear in the ECC's Twitter policy

Promotion

The ECC's Twitter channel will be promoted by:

* a news release issued to key stakeholders;
* a link from the homepage – also considering displaying tweets on the right hand side of the homepage;
* finding and following relevant Twitter users;
* adding a link to news release notes to editors; and
* displaying the link on all ECC PowerPoint presentations.

Re-tweeting

The Office may be asked to re-tweet content from other users from time to time. This will need to be considered on a case-by-case basis. In some instances it may be helpful to share interesting and authoritative content (developed outside of the ECC) with followers. However, in general, the ECO will not actively seek to carry out this practice, particularly in the early stages of the site's development.

However, as the ECC's use of the channel matures, it should reconsider this policy to determine whether requests from Administrations and other important stakeholder groups should be honoured more generally.

Evaluation

The effectiveness of the ECC's Twitter account will be evaluated through:

* the following/follower data in its account;
* the relevance and type of followers;
* number of web traffic referrals from Twitter to the website;
* feedback from followers; and
* the number of re-tweets.

**Conclusion**

By launching on Twitter, the ECC is hoping to raise its profile with specialist media. It is also inviting dialogue with a wide range of users which could lead to a higher profile and broader stakeholder base. However, such interaction has to be properly managed to have a beneficial effect.

The ECO will monitor how Twitter is usedand implement a management process to respond to relevant comments and issues as they arise. As part of the ECO's management of the site, stakeholder comments and feedback will be regularly reviewed and the main talking points reported back to the ECC at future SG meetings for information.

If the ECC SG is content to endorse the strategy and approach set out in this paper, the ECO will begin preparations to set up the ECC's Twitter account and management processes. Its intention would then be to launch the ECC's Twitter channel as part of its planned package of more regular communications, notably more frequent News Releases,and a monthly news bulletin summary on the website. This should be put in place in March or April of this year.

**ANNEX 1a**

**Twitter policy (would be published on the website)**

The Electronic Communications Committee's (ECC) Twitter account is managed by the European Communications Office (ECO).

We do not use any automation (such as feeds which generate tweets from RSS feeds) on Twitter to post content.

If you follow @CEPT\_ECC, you can expect between 1-2 tweets a week covering the following:

* Alerts about new content on the ECC's website
* news releases
* upcoming consultations
* Working Group and Project Team meetings; outcomes.
* updates from the ECC Chairman and ECO Director and our experts

**Following**

If you follow @CEPT\_ECC we will not automatically follow you back. This is to discourage the use of direct messaging, avoid spam handling and so that you can easily identify other key Twitter users that we think are relevant to our member countries and industry associates who we follow. However, being followed by the ECC does not imply endorsement of any kind.

[**Alternative:** If you follow @CEPT\_ECC on Twitter we will follow you back. This is automated. Being followed by the ECC does not imply endorsement of any kind.]

**Availability**

We will update and monitor the ECC's Twitter account during [*a specified day part*], Monday to Friday.

Twitter may occasionally be unavailable and we accept no responsibility for lack of service due to Twitter downtime.

**@Replies and Direct Messages**

We welcome feedback and ideas from all our followers, and endeavour to join the conversation where possible. However, we are not able to reply individually to all the messages we receive via Twitter.

The ECO team reads all @replies and Direct Messages and ensures that any emerging themes or helpful suggestions are passed to the relevant people at the ECC.

We cannot reply to all questions or issues. However, even if we do not reply, it does not mean that we have not listened. We cannot engage on issues outside of our Terms of Reference or Rules of Procedure.

If you want to contact the ECC by other means, contact details are available from our website at: www.cept.org/ecc

**Retweeting**

Requests from followers to retweet their messages will not generally be carried out. In some circumstances, the ECC may agree to retweet a message if requested by one of its member countries. Such requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

The ECC may also retweet a message, without being requested to do so, when it is considered to be of benefit to its followers.

Retweets of any kind do not imply endorsement.

(Reproduced with the kind permission of Neil Williams: <http://neilojwilliams.net/missioncreep/2009/how-to-write-a-corporate-twitter-strategy-and-heres-one-i-made-earlier/>)

**Annex 2**

**The spring ECC Newsletter**

The spring edition of the ECC Newsletter should be targeted for release in March. The Office proposes that it should cover at least three topics:

1. An introductory article from the new ECC Chairman, reviewing the ECC’s position and setting out his hopes for the next period ahead.
2. The developments of EFIS in the last year and in the time ahead. This includes (particularly) the anticipated role of EFIS in the Spectrum inventory project.
3. The Numbering Green Paper produced in 2012 by WG NaN: its context and some of its main conclusions

These are all very significant topics which together should make a substantive edition. However, there is room for a 4th article if the ECC SG wishes to propose one: especially if some external contribution were received in writing the article.