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3 European Commission
4 Directorate-General for Communication networks, Content & Technology
5 Unit H1 – Health and Well-Being
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10
11 **Public consultation on the safety of apps and other non-embedded software**
12
13

14 First of all, a lot of thanks to (Unit H1) the European Commission Directorate-General for
15 Communications Networks, Content & Technology (DG CONNECT) for organising this important
16 consultation.

17
18 This opinion represents an opinion of an individual citizen, not any legal entity.

19
20 This opinion does not contain:
21 – any business secrets
22 – any trade secrets
23 – any confidential information.

24
25 This opinion is public.
26 PDF file of this opinion can be added to a relevant web page

27
28 Annex 1 holds information about previous consultations on the European Union level.
29 Annex 2 holds information about disclaimers and copyright.

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33 Best Regards,

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35
36
37 Jukka S. Rannila
38 citizen of Finland
39
40 signed electronically

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43 [Continues on the next page]
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45

46

47 **Previous consultations (about information systems) / Annex 1**

48

49 Annex 1 holds a list of previous consultations organised by different European Union organisations
50 – mainly organised by the European Commission.

51

52 Based on previous opinions I have explained several issues in detailed way. It can be noted that
53 some issues are repeated since many consultations concentrated on information technology.

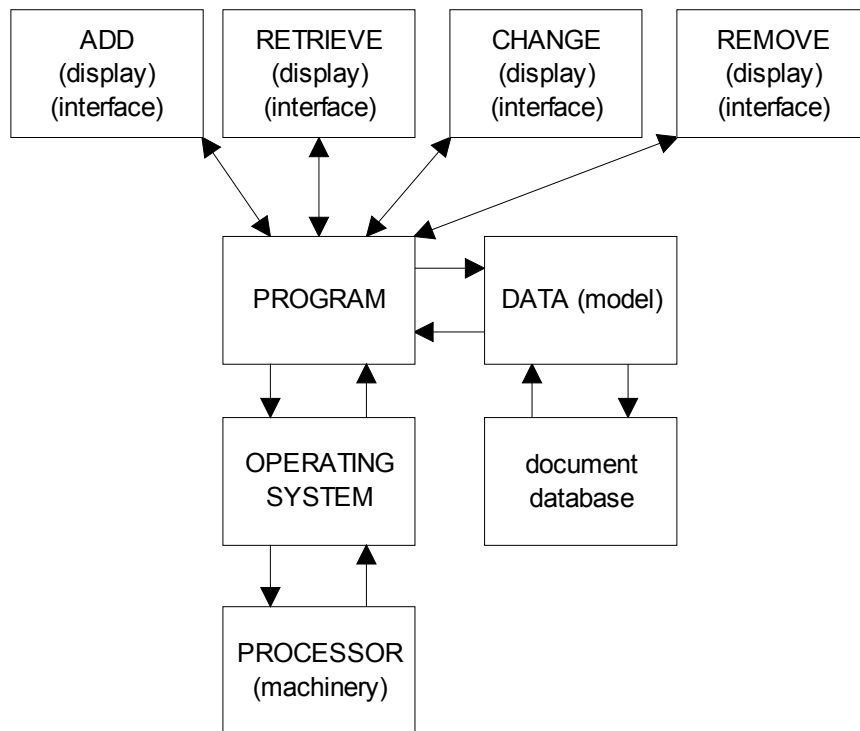
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55 This opinion does not repeat all previous issues (mainly information technology) mentioned on the
56 previous opinion documents.

57

58 **One conception of information technology / membership, ownership and agreements**

59



60

61

62 Generally speaking we have different techniques on the information technology field. Here we can
63 note that programs (most arrows) are in the middle of different information systems. Then programs
64 handle the data in a system (documents and/or databases). However we have to have one specific
65 program which is different – i.e. operating system. Operating systems handle connections with
66 machinery and processors. Generally speaking programs can work with an operating system and
67 developers of programs use different parts of an operating system.

68

69 We have to note that data can have different models and data (models) are developed and/or used by
70 different stakeholders (four basic functions). Especially in databases there are possibilities for

71 several data models; depending on the modellers there can be different data models in databases.
72 Generally speaking changing data models can be very difficult in many cases.

73

74 In the previous consultations I have advocated following solution as the maximum solution:

75

76 * public sector institute owns the machinery and processor of the information system

77 * the machinery and processor are based on relevant open standards

78 * the operating system is based on an open-source solution

79 * public sector institute owns the source code of the information system

80 * public sector institute owns the database of the information system

81 * the database is based on open-source solution and on relevant open standards

82 * public sector institute owns all data in the information system.

83

84 Naturally, there can be solutions, which are not based on the maximum solution.

85

86 Next table gives us some possibilities for assessing possibilities for open solutions and closed
87 solutions.

88

89 **Note: The relations between different aspects of information systems can result rather
90 complicated (legal) network(s): i.e. Ownership, Membership, Agreement.**

91

92 **Proposal: There could be some considerations for assessing possible / future changes in
93 ownerships, agreements and memberships.**

94

95 Here we can note the difference between owners, agreements and members. In reality ownerships
96 agreements and memberships cause very complex networks, and those networks are changing all
97 the time: divisions, mergers, ownership changes, agreement changes, cooperation with other
98 entities, life-cycles, etc.

99

100 Here we can note that ownership, agreement and membership are interlinked in different ways.

101 Generally speaking average usage of a system means an unique combination of ownership,

102 agreement and membership. When everything works fine there are not problems. However changes
103 with ownership, agreement and membership can result difficult situations.

104

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112 [Continues on the next page]

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	Owner? Member? Agreement?	OPEN	CLOSED
1. Device / Machinery			
2. Operating system			
3. Program(s)			
4. Data models / Conceptual models			
5. Documents			
6. Databases			
7. Communications			
8. Retrieve / Interface / Display			
9. Add / Interface / Display			
10. Remove / Interface / Display			
11. Change / Interface / Display			

116

117

What this means to safety of apps and other non-embedded software?

118

1) There can be problems with private ownership.

119

2) Ownership changes have implications for security issues with information systems.

120

121

3) Complex layers of ownership, membership and agreements mean several problems when developing and maintaining different software.

122

123

One conception of information technology / Direct system-to-system connection / Connection using different documents

124

125

126

127

Basic functions in an information system (retrieve, add, change, remove, data and documents) can be noted once more. Cooperation between systems can based on direct system-to-system connections (standards) or transferring documents (standards) between systems.

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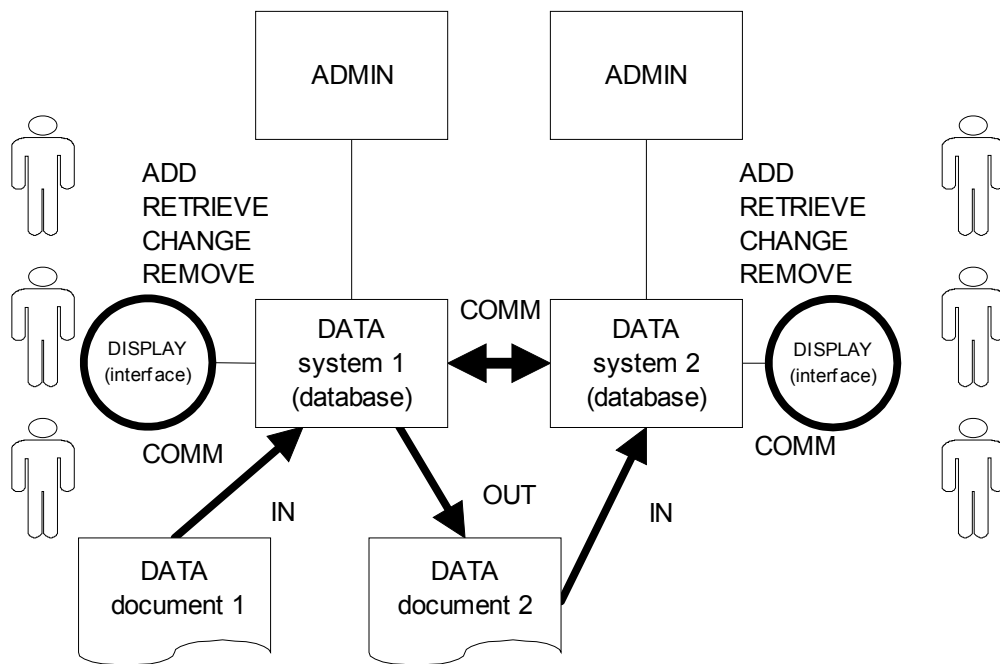
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135
 136
 137 From this simple (figure) conception we can differentiate several standard classes.

- 138
 139 1) Data (documents) standards
 140 2) Data (database) standards
 141 3) Standards for adding data to a system.
 142 4) Standards for retrieving data from a system.
 143 5) Standards for changing data in a system.
 144 6) Standards for removing data from a system.
 145 7) Display standards
 146 8) Interface standards
 147 9) Different communication standards.

148
 149 This actually means at least nine (9) different standard classes, and there can be both open and
 150 closed standards in different layers.

151
 152 **What this means to safety of apps and other non-embedded software?**

- 153 1) **There are different and competing standards on different levels.**
 154 2) **Different standard versions means security problems.**
 155 3) **Different information systems means implementation of several standards.**
 156 4) **There can different mismatches between different standards in an information**
 157 **system.**

158
 159 Basic functions in an information system (retrieve, add, change, remove, data and documents) can
 160 be noted once more. Cooperation between systems can based on direct system-to-system
 161 connections (standards) or transferring documents (standards) between systems.

162
163 **What this means to safety of apps and other non-embedded software?**

164 **1) Direct system-to-system connections mean more security problems.**

165
166 Like the figure indicates, there are databases in different information systems. Then there are
167 different documents for transmitting data between different systems. Here we can note especially
168 following standardisation needs for different parts of different parts of an information system.

- 169
170 * communication standards
171 * data standards (also document standards)
172 * database standards
173 * display / interface standards.

174
175 **Proposal: There could different standardisation efforts for communication, data,
176 document, database, display/interface standards.**

177
178 **Proposal: Assessing previously developed standards could be done seriously.**

179
180 Here we can note that there can be direct system-to-system connections, which can mean some
181 standardised interfaces. Also we can note that different document formats can be used when there is
182 system-to-system connections.

183
184 **Note: There may be a need for both solutions – direct system-to-system
185 connections and transmitting different documents between systems.**

186
187 **Proposal: Probably there has to both options implemented – direct system-to-system
188 connections and transmitting different documents between systems.**

189
190 **Standards / “standards wars” or “format wars” / Standardisation organisations**

191
192 There are different standards setting organisations on the information technology field. One list ¹ of
193 these standards setting organisations is provided by ConsortiumInfo.org.

194
195 **What this means to safety of apps and other non-embedded software?**

196 **1) Assessment of different standards means a lot of work.**

197
198 One warning can be said about standards setting organisations. All standards setting organisations
199 are not successes based on several factors and there can may irrelevant standards setting
200 organisations.

201
202 Here we can note some problems:

203
204
205

1 Standard Setting Organizations and Standards List, www.consortiuminfo.org/links/linksall.php

- 206 • some systems are based on **de-facto** standards
- 207 • some systems are based on **de-jure** standards
- 208 • there can be confrontations between **de-facto** and **de-jure** standards
- 209 • there can be a monopoly situation in some domain
- 210 • some standards may inhibit possible actions of some stakeholders
- 211 • there can be a standard war on some domains
- 212 • standards have different life-cycles
- 213 • systems have different life-cycles
- 214 • there can be mismatches between different life-cycles
- 215 • there can be failed standards
- 216 • there can be deprecated standards.

What this means to safety of apps and other non-embedded software?

- 219 **1) This means constant reviews of different standards.**
- 220 **2) It is possible to implement “wrong” standards.**
- 221 **3) Part of selected standards can be failures.**
- 222 **4) This means constant work for implementing existing and new standards.**
- 223 **5) Constant modifications of software can result new security problems.**

225 It is quite normal situation in the information technology field that there are competing standards
226 for some application field. Therefore there are all the time ongoing “standards wars” or “format
227 wars”. The information technology standards tend to be interrelated and one “standards war” or
228 “format war” can lead to another similar situation.

230 I have advocated open standards even though in some cases open standards are not de facto
231 standards. In practice public sector has very important role, when some standards are competing in
232 the market place. Because public sector has a considerable power when buying/developing
233 information systems and therefore public sector can sometimes direct markets to certain standards.
234 Therefore there should be serious vigilance when assessing different standards and “standards” in
235 some application fields.

237 **Proposal: Current standardisation (e.g. list provided by ConsortiumInfo.org) efforts by
238 different organisations could be assessed carefully.**

240 There are differences between horizontal and vertical standards. A simple example is naturally
241 email solutions. There are several vertical standards when creating technically email solutions. Then
242 there are horizontal standards which enable sending messages between technically different email
243 solutions.

245 **Proposal: There could be assessment of vertical and horizontal standards.**

247 **Proposal: Using horizontal standards could be favoured when creating different
248 information systems.**

250 Horizontal standards enables technological solutions which can work together. Horizontal standards

251 hides different complexities in information systems.

252

253 **Opinion: The number of redundant standardisation efforts should be minimal.**

254

255 **Proposal: There could be separation of horizontal standards and vertical standards.**

256

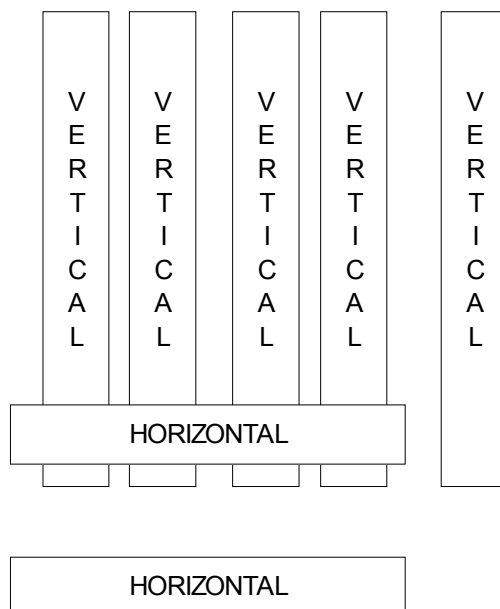
257 **Proposal: There could be different standardisation efforts to horizontal standards and**
258 **vertical standards.**

259

260 Personally I have advocated using different horizontal standards. For example email standards
261 (horizontal) are implemented with very different technologies (vertical). (New) Horizontal
262 standards should be open.

263

264



265

266

267 **Proposal: Governments should especially concentrate on horizontal standards.**

268

269 **Proposal: Some government agencies could apply for memberships of different**
270 **standard setting organisations which develop especially open horizontal standards.**

271

272 **Proposal: Government agencies should not be passive by-standers when different open**
273 **horizontal standards are developed.**

274

275 **Proposal: Government agencies could financially support development of open**
276 **horizontal standards.**

277

278 Here we can note that developing horizontal standards is very demanding compared to developing

279 vertical standards.

280

281 **What this means to safety of apps and other non-embedded software?**

282 1) **Sometimes there are no open horizontal standards.**

283 2) **Development of new (open) standards means hired personnel and other**
284 **monetary costs.**

285 3) **Absence of open horizontal standards means several problems.**

286 4) **Horizontal standards based on private solutions mean several problems.**

287

288 **More and more new identifiers (ID) / Challenges to privacy?**

289

290 In the previous consultations there has been discussion about different identifiers (ID) in different
291 information systems. It can be noted from the previous opinions that there will be several and
292 different identifiers (ID) for different levels. On the European Union level there can be several
293 identifiers (ID), e.g. following:

294

295 * global identifiers (ID)

296 * EU-wide identifiers (ID)

297 * general member state identifiers (ID)

298 * several identifiers (ID) in member states.

299

300 It can be noted, that some member states (EU) are federations, and different federal states can have
301 their own identifiers (ID).

302

303 Examples of these identifiers (ID) are following:

304

305 1) Facebook ID for an individual person

306 2) Facebook ID for the individual up-dates of individuals

307 3) Data Universal Numbering System (D-U-N-S)

308 4) Reuters instruments codes (RICs)

309 5) Social security code for individual citizens in the European Union member states

310 6) Business identity code for a company in an European Union member state

311 7) Value added tax code for a company in an European Union member state.

312

313 The examples of private identifiers (Facebook IDs, Data Universal Numbering System (D-U-N-S),
314 Reuters Instrumens Codes (RICs)) show, that persons and/or communities can use or even demand
315 of using identifiers (ID) from privately owned information systems.

316

317 **Proposal: There could be a systematic review of different identifiers (ID) on different**
318 **levels.**

319

320 **Proposal: Possible systematic review of different identifiers (ID) should assess different**
321 **situations: member states (EU), European (inside EU and outside EU) and global.**

322

323 Different information systems have also internal identifiers (ID) and external identifiers (ID) for

324 (possible) public usage. The added value for different stakeholders is provided by combination of
325 different identifiers (ID) in a specific information system.

326

327 **Proposal: There could be some assessment(s) based on different versions of different**
328 **identifiers (ID).**

329

330 It can be possible, that there are some legacy identifiers (ID) in the near future. It can be possible,
331 that gradually some legacy identifiers (ID) can be consolidated for more standardised identifiers
332 (ID), but this consolidation means some serious technical and administrative actions.

333

334 **Proposal: Legacy identifiers (ID) could be assessed seriously.**

335

336 When information about relevant identifiers is collected, there could be a serious assessment of
337 possible (near) monopoly situation of some identifiers. Depending on the nature of an identifier,
338 there may be a need for serious (anti-trust?) negotiations with providers of some identifiers.

339

340 **Proposal: The nature of different identifiers (ID) could be assessed.**

341

342 **Proposal: There could be serious negotiations with some providers of identifiers (ID).**

343

344 In the European Union there has been different anti-trust cases which are related to different private
345 sector identifiers (ID), since some of those private sector identifiers (ID) have been used in several
346 other systems. Some private sector identifiers (ID) can mean a (near) monopoly situation.

347

348 **What this means to safety of apps and other non-embedded software?**

349 **1) Digitalisation of everything means more identifiers (ID).**

350 **2) All new identifiers (ID) mean more work for developing existing and new**
351 **informations systems.**

352 **3) New identifiers (ID) mean new security problems.**

353 **4) Some new identifiers (ID) can be private solutions.**

354

355 **Problem with several interfaces?**

356

357 Here we can note people learn usage of an information system with different timeframes ($T_n \leftrightarrow T_n$).
358 In time beginners can become expert users after some experience of using a system. A general
359 mistake is to create just one interface to all stakeholder groups – in many cases interface is
360 developed for beginners.

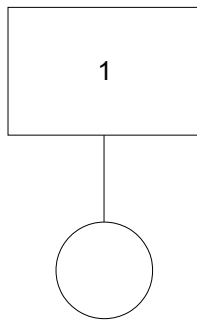
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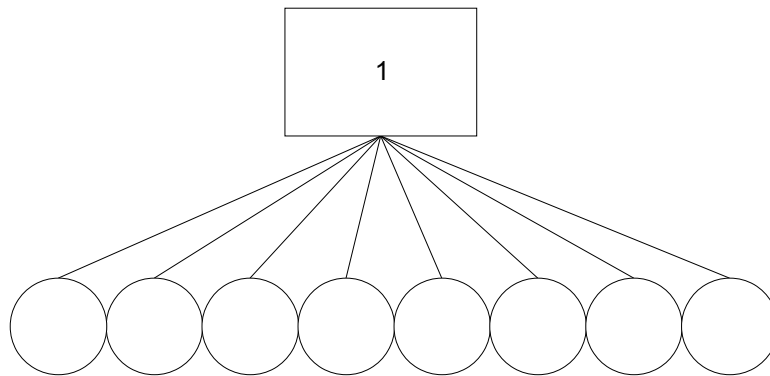
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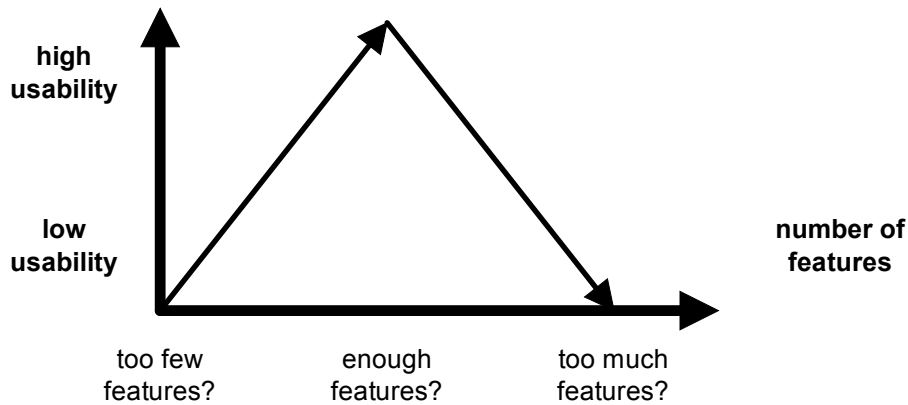
In reality expert users need efficient shortcuts to all functions in an information system. After creating an interface to experts users there can be development of interfaces to other stakeholder groups.



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Proposal: Number of different interfaces should be assessed carefully.

Proposal: Creating different displays and interfaces could be assessed carefully.

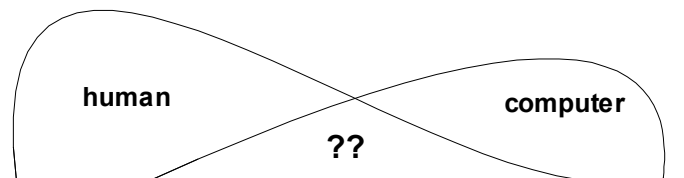


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379

380 It is also possible that there are too many features implemented in an information system; too many
381 features means problems for expert users and average users. Like said before there has to be
382 different interfaces – not just one interface for beginners.

383



384

385

386 In reality there are several ways for organising task: humans only; computers only; combinations
387 for human and computers. Naturally the last task (combinations for human and computers) is
388 hardest to implement in reality – sometimes we create wrong combinations for these tasks.

389

390 **What this means to safety of apps and other non-embedded software?**

391 1) (New) interfaces and/or displays mean new security problems.

392 2) Number of features in interfaces and/or displays can be overwhelming.

393 3) Complex interfaces mean new security problems.

394

395 In previous consultations I have advocated standardisation of interfaces. There are different
396 processes (Beginning → Actions → Ending), which can be described in different levels of details.

397

398 Based on the previously proposed actions there can be a clear understanding of different processes.

399 It can be noted that describing different processes can mean a lot of work for different stakeholders.

400

401 It can be noted here that describing different processes are implemented in information systems which
402 are hierarchically structured. So there is always some possible mismatches between actual process
403 models and actual hierarchy of system.

404

405 Here we can note, that in a process some objects change their state in different stages.

406

407 **Proposal: After some serious assessment there could be some serious work for
408 standardised (SPEX) interfaces and displays.**

409

410 **Proposal: Some parts of the processes could be standardised for interfaces (SPEX) for
411 different stakeholders.**

412

413 **Proposal: Some standardised customer interfaces (SPEX) could be used for having
414 better service processes for different stakeholders.**

415

416 It can be noted, that several systems could implement (SPEX) the same parts of different processes,
417 even though the technology in different systems can be totally different.

418

419 Here we can differentiate following issues:

420

421

- object of a process
- beginning of a process
- ending of a process
- actions of a process
- variety in a situation.

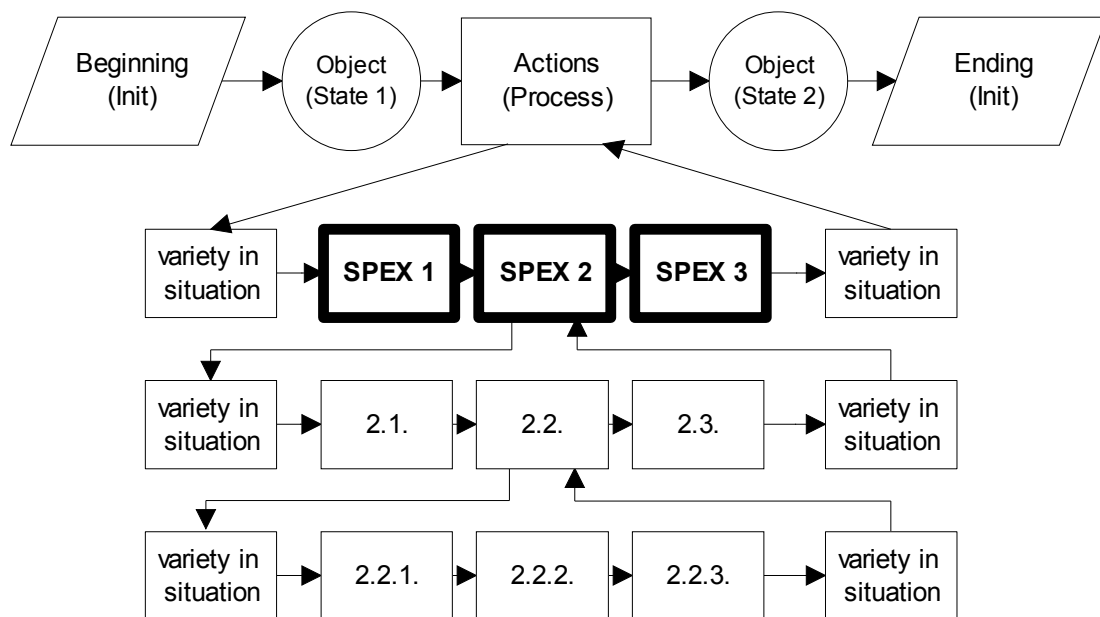
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428

429 There can be different objects: especially material, information and humans. Material and
 430 information is stable but humans are never in a stable state.

431

432 There could be some points in a process model where there is very detailed (**SPEX**) parts. Naturally
 433 in these parts (**SPEX**) there could be very detailed information about different concepts.

434

435 Since humans are learning entities there can be different shortcuts in different process models
 436 implemented in computerised systems.

437

438 Based on the previously proposed actions there can be a clear understanding of different processes.
 439 It can noted that describing different processes can mean a lot of work for different stakeholders.

440

441 It can be noted here that describing different processes are implement in information systems which
 442 are hierarchically structured. So there is always some possible mismatches between actual process
 443 models and actual hierarchy of system.

444

445

446

447 **What this means to safety of apps and other non-embedded software?**

- 448 1) **Ambiguous specifications (SPEX) for standardising interfaces mean more**
449 **problems.**
450 2) **Too complex interfaces mean several security problems.**
451

452 **Actually specifying something (SPEX) / Processes**
453

454 Previously I have mentioned concepts and interfaces. It is always possible to model processes for
455 different information systems.

456
457 Here we can note that processes can be modelled on different levels. Then it could be possible to
458 decide which parts of the process (SPEX) are done with computers and what can be more traditional
459 (SPEX) interfaces – e.g. paper-based forms.

460
461 **Proposal: Different processes between different stakeholder groups can be modelled.**
462

463 **Proposal: After modelling concepts there can be more reasoned decision for computer-**
464 **based interfaces (SPEX) and traditional interfaces (SPEX).**
465

466 **Proposal: Different traditional interfaces (SPEX) could be explicated first – e.g. paper-**
467 **bases forms.**
468

469 **Proposal: After explicating traditional interfaces (SPEX) there can be some modelling**
470 **work for user interfaces.**
471

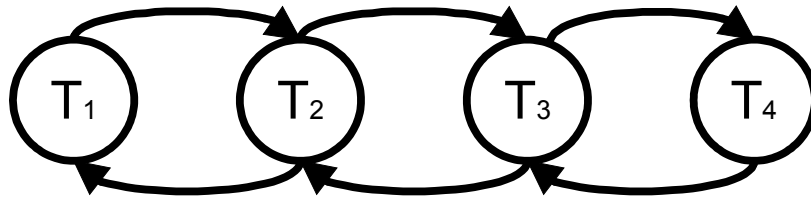
472 After modelling traditional user interfaces (e.g. paper-based forms) it could be possible to have all
473 relevant concepts explicated. After explicating different concepts it can be possible to model user
474 interfaces based on different concepts.

475
476 Nowadays we have different tools for describing / modelling different user interfaces. I have
477 browsed web pages of some user interfaces developing tools. One promising tool is ² Pencil (by
478 Evolus). With that kind tool it could be possible to model different user interfaces.
479

480 I have proposed following order for modelling user interfaces:
481

- 482 1) Simple and powerful user interfaces for *expert users* should be modelled first.
483 2) Next user interface could be for daily user.
484 3) Next user interface could be for weekly users.
485 4) Next user interface could be for monthly users.
486 5) Etc. can be developed gradually.
487

2 <http://pencil.evolus.vn>, open-source GUI prototyping tool (Pencil by Evolus)



488
489

490 Different expert users need shortcuts to everything and their interfaces can be very simple. People
491 learn and forget ($T_n \leftrightarrow T_n$) different issues when using systems and therefore it should be possible to
492 move between different interfaces. It should be possible to become an expert user (T_1, T_2, T_3, T_4)
493 after some learning processes.

494

Proposal: Different user interfaces for expert users could be modelled first.

496

**Proposal: More complex user interfaces could be modelled after modelling user
497 interfaces for expert users.**

498

499

500 Generally speaking we tend to create interfaces which are not valued by expert users. Expert users
501 need shortcuts to everything. It can be also said that users learn different issues gradually and
502 therefore there can be different interfaces based on learning processes of different users.

503

504 Depending on time (T_1, T_2, T_3, T_4, T_n) users learn and forget different features ($T_n \leftrightarrow T_n$) of a
505 specific system. Therefore there can be different shortcuts and even different interfaces for different
506 stakeholders. Like said expert users demand very simple and powerful interfaces.

507

**Proposal: There could be a consultation for gathering interface proposals from
508 different stakeholders (communities).**

509

510

Problem of complicated requirements?

512

513 (New) information system features should conform to the different requirements. Requirements
514 engineering is very high-risk task in the information and communication technology (ICT) field.
515 Therefore we have even today very high-risk projects failing because of the requirements
516 engineering problems.

517

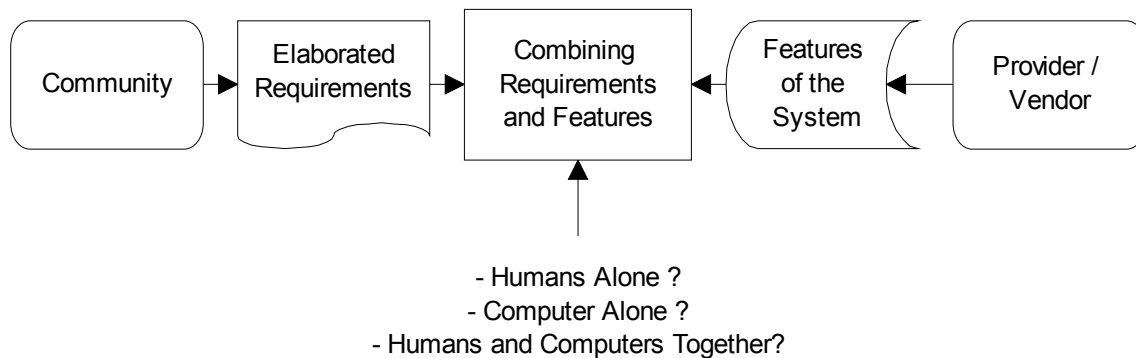
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523
 524
 525 Traditionally requirements engineering has been divided in to three distinct areas:
 526 1) discovery
 527 2) specification
 528 3) validation and verification.
 529

530 One thing is sure, requirements engineering is very high-risk task in the information and
 531 communication technology (ICT) field. Therefore we have even today very high-risk projects
 532 failing because of the requirements engineering problems.
 533

534 However it can be said with high certainty that this consultation will not result full discovery and
 535 totally unambiguous specification. Therefore the actual implementation of the (new) information
 536 system can open totally new scenes of new and unforeseen requirements – thus opening a way for a
 537 new information system failure.
 538

539 Different requirements for an IT system can be described in many ways, and there can be
 540 mismatches between features and requirements. Also, the division of labour between humans and
 541 computers can cause problems, and there are always real possibilities for creating cumbersome IT
 542 solutions.
 543

544 **Proposal: Developing formalised open specifications can be supported.**
 545

546 **What this means to safety of apps and other non-embedded software**

- 547 1) **Complex requirements mean more problems.**
- 548 2) **There is always danger of having too ambiguous requirements.**
- 549 3) **Creation of well-defined requirements mean hired personnel and other**
 550 **monetary costs.**

551
 552 **An example for cooperation: Web feeds (RSS and Atom)**
 553



554

555

556 I have advocated usage of web feeds on several previous opinion documents. Actually there are two
557 standards for web feeds: RSS^{3 4} and Atom^{5 6 7}.

558

559 **Proposal: Web feeds could be advocated when developing different informations**
560 **systems.**

561

562 **Proposal: Web feeds (RSS and/or Atom) should be used extensively for providing (real-**
563 **time) information for different stakeholder(s) (communities).**

564

565 **Proposal: There can be different web feeds (RSS and/or Atom) for different**
566 **stakeholder(s) – having just one web feed (RSS and/or Atom) may not be a feasible**
567 **solution.**

568

569 **Proposal: Several web feeds (RSS and/or Atom) can be based on different viewpoints.**

570

571 It can be easier to create web feeds in different information systems since web feeds enable
572 connections without direct system-to-system connections.

573

574 It can be noted, that different back-office systems (with a wide variety of different technologies) can
575 implement RSS standards, and these RSS feeds can be used in the front-office systems. With this
576 kind solutions front-office systems dont need direct system-to-system communications with back-
577 office systems.

578

579

580 **Good luck!!!**

581

582 This opinion is quite limited. Hopefully there are other constructive ideas presented in other
583 opinions. This remains to be seen.

584

585 [Continues on the next page]

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587

3 <http://www.rssboard.org/rss-specification>, RSS 2.0 Specification

4 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RSS>, Wikipedia / RSS

5 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atom_\(standard\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atom_(standard)), Wikipedia / Atom (standard)

6 <https://tools.ietf.org/html/rfc4287>, The Atom Syndication Format

7 <https://tools.ietf.org/html/rfc5023>, The Atom Publishing Protocol

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ANNEX 1

My opinions to the previous and relevant consultations – there consultations were mostly organised by the Commission of the European Union. General page to all consultations – both in English and in Finnish: <http://www.jukkarannila.fi/lausunnot.html>

EN: Opinion 1: Review of the rules on access to documents
http://www.jukkarannila.fi/lausunnot.html#nro_1

EN: Opinion 2: Schools for the 21st Century
http://www.jukkarannila.fi/lausunnot.html#nro_2

EN: Opinion 3: The future of pharmaceuticals for Human use in Europe- making Europe a Hub for Safe and Innovative medicines
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EN: Opinion 19: Official Acknowledgement by the Commission
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- 636 EN: Opinion 21: Opinion about the European Interoperability Strategy proposal
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- 639 EN: Opinion 23: Public consultation on the review of the European Standardisation System
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748
- 749
- 750 My opinions to the previous and relevant consultations – there consultations were mostly organised
751 by the Commission of the European Union. General page to all consultations – both in English and
752 in Finnish: <http://www.jukkarannila.fi/lausunnot.html>
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- 756 [Continues on the next page]
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ANNEX 2

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10 Based on the Finnish three-party system there is a phenomenon called extreme-centre in Finland. The 2011 parliamentary elections in Finland challenged the three-party system, since three “old” parties were not traditionally as the three largest parties. On 2015 this “new” party is part of the current Finnish Government. We all must be interested about this new development in Finland.