

ICT as a tool for consumer empowerment

Potential and reasons for not getting
caught up in the hype

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ICT as a tool for mobilization

- ✓ Consumer organisations use more and more ICT to mobilize consumers
 - www.obesipub.org : a campaign enabling consumers to write to their MPs very easily to request a law on child obesity (UFC)
 - www.ensembleenjustice.org : 17.736 consumers have used the click on that website to respond to the EU consultation on common principles for collective redress (UFC/CLCV)
 - www.laquadrature.net : makes it possible to monitor the behaviour of MEPs in issues related to ICT and copyright.
- ✓ ICT are a blessing for less affluent organisations to engage with consumers, especially in Central, Eastern and South Eastern Europe



ICT as a tool for democracy

- ✓ Three pillars of democracy :
 - Representation
 - Participation
 - Deliberation
- ✓ Condition = high level of commitment and engagement from population
- ✓ Potential of ICT to involve population in decision making



ICT as a tool for knowledge sharing

- ✓ Wikis allow for the cooperation and sharing of knowledge between multiple users
- ✓ Re-use of content : need for balanced approach between protection of copyright and access to knowledge



ICT as a tool for changing consumer behaviour

- ✓ Which? i-phone application : guiding consumers through common consumer problems in shops or on travels (explanation of rights, FAQ, sample letters for complaining)
- ✓ FoE and ECO smart phone application « the Good Shopping Guide » : consumers can compare the ethical company index of different brands for the same product
- ✓ www.chercarburant.org (UFC) : consumers can calculate their petrol bill
- ✓ Smart metering : real time feedback on energy consumption



Challenges to overcome

- ✓ Access to ICT technologies and access to internet : in 2009, 30% of EU population have never used the internet
- ✓ Closing down the digital divide : providing consumers and citizens with e-skills
- ✓ Ensuring the neutrality of the net : freedom for people to have access to information of their choice



Challenges to overcome

- ✓ Ensure privacy and security of personal information
- ✓ Ensure interoperability between different software and hardware
- ✓ Involve civil society in the design and the development of the internet of the future



Challenges to overcome

- ✓ Bridge the gap between awareness and action :
 - ICT just a tool
 - ICT just part of the solution
 - Use results of behavioural economics
 - Make action easier for consumers



More information on
www.beuc.eu

EC register for interest representatives :
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