

Making 3G Services a Reality Through Co-operation

a report by

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Professional activities that have been dedicated to foster international co-operation, either within the telecoms sector or across industries, have one unique objective in mind: to add value to the entire membership or the community concerned.

When 3G services are addressed, not only the telecoms community, but the entire industry and user community should be interested and potentially concerned.

Major issues that need to be resolved, mainly through a co-operative approach, are related to security, responsibility and liability and implying a number of technical standardised solutions, which need to be endorsed by the key players, Telecoms, banks, card companies, the information technology industry and, at the end of the supply chain, the users or customers.

This article focuses on the need for co-operation between these key players, to speed up the setting of the proper architecture for allowing 3G services to be delivered and the acceptance of rules that clearly define the responsibilities and roles in that process.

Concurrently, a number of projects, initiatives and programmes are taking place at the time of writing. Some of these are initiated by standards bodies, such as the European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI) and the European Committee for Standardization Information Society Standardization System (CEN/ISSS) and some by the European Commission (EC), and some are initiated by industry bodies such as the e- and Telecommunications Information Services (ETIS).

Interface and cross involvement are also taking place, which help gain more synergy and achieve better understanding of need.

An important lesson already learnt is to avoid designing or implementing a tool equivalent to one that already exists or is part of one.

Secondly, there is the issue of trying to work together with a true spirit of co-operation for the benefit of all,

which assumes the capacity to step back from time to time, form its own view and its own business interest and look for the win-win scenario.

Another critical component for success is to keep in mind the fact that any of these future 3G services could not exist without user acceptance and buy-in. Therefore, their initial requirements must be taken into account if they exist, or they should be identified by all means.

Finally, it is also important to understand the major difference in nature between 2G and 2.5G services and the new generation of 3G and 4G services to come. The only word (beyond the technology used and the capacity offered) that can be used to qualify that difference is 'content'.

Looking at the impact on new mobile transactions involving real content (digital), it can be perceived that the needs for common new rules and responsibilities, which is well understood and accepted, are key to the delivery of such services.

The Active Loss Prevention for Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Enabled Enterprise (ALPINE) Working Group on the one hand and the ETSI M-commerce Working Group on the other are among the initiatives that could make a valuable contribution to managing the level of complexity that is being dealt with in this area.

This article focuses on the new European ALPINE Working Group initiative and explains the background and the potential benefits for the industry and the user community.

The ALPINE Working Group – An Evolutionary Approach to Managing e-Business Security

Telecoms operators have for many years been at the forefront of developing and deploying new technologies. We are confident that the convergence of new hand-held functionality, increased bandwidth and richer content provided by 3G will increasingly generate the interest of mobile

customers and create opportunities for a new generation of applications and services. At the same time, we have also learned that technology can often be blinding in terms of the pace at which it changes and also in the way in which it is thought that users want to work and conduct business. This is proven to be especially true for e-business.

security. It embraces the new technologies such as encryption or biometrics but, equally importantly, it combines the disciplines of legal, audit and financial risk to create an environment for mobile transactions where overall e-business risk is actively managed in ways similar to the ways in which telecoms operators manage business risk today.

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While each telecoms operator would like to lead the next revolution in mobile services and an associated exponential jump in mobile transactions, the reality is that most change involving users is evolutionary rather than revolutionary. Users need time to adapt, change and assimilate new functionality and features and, in some cases, find new uses for technology that may not have been considered. It is known that the mobile phone is already becoming the pre-eminent device for conducting e-business transactions but, as new technologies are introduced, it should be asked whether users of mobile transactions are being provided with a path that is evolutionary or revolutionary.

One of the essential elements required for e-business and new 3G services is the ability to conduct secure transactions: security for the mobile user in protecting privacy and preventing unauthorised transactions, and security for the telecoms operator in verifying user identity and completing financial transactions.

In the fast-paced world of mobile technologies, the fact that users and telecoms operators have been conducting secure transactions for several decades is often overlooked. Users routinely place verbal orders over their telephones for goods and services, and telecoms operators have accepted orders and have relied on billions of cheques and bank transfers as payment for services rendered. These transactions were not 100% secure but were made possible through well-established business procedures, regulations and legal recourse. Financial insurance could also be obtained to minimise the loss when security failures did occur.

Active loss prevention is an important and evolutionary approach to managing e-business

With the financial support of the EC, the ALPINE Working Group has been established to bring together experts from the different disciplines responsible for protecting e-business investments and supporting business transactions. The ALPINE Working Group provides a forum for experts to meet and agree on multidisciplinary approaches and methods that will address e-business security using many of the same techniques used today for other business investments.

The ALPINE Working Group includes three parallel Special Interest Groups, addressing the following key elements essential for managing e-business security.

1. Liability in mobile transactions – identifying and agreeing among the parties involved the liabilities associated with different elements and types of mobile transactions, as understanding liability is fundamental to managing risks.
- 2) Trust services mapping – putting in place a comprehensive view of services that can ensure the integrity of e-business transactions in much the same way that transactions involving contracts and signatures have integrity today.
- 3) Security policy management – defining the best practices that ensure security and risk management procedures are up to date, fully implemented and providing the desired business benefit of reducing risk. ■

The Special Interest Groups are open to all and additional Special Interest Groups were identified at the ALPINE Workshop in Paris on 3 December 2002.

Free registration to the ALPINE Working Group can be performed at <http://www.alpine-wg.org/conference>