PirateTimes

Welcome to the first edition of the Pirate Times newsletter for 2013.

This time we start with news from Belgium. The Pirate Party Belgium had a extraordinary general assembly to restructure their party. Furthermore we have another case of blocking, as Iceland Piratepads are blocked as \"hate-speech\" and \"computer crimes\". Another article concerns something that most find positive, automatic blocking of ads, but this tilts and violates network neutrality when done automatically by an ISP.

But there is also good news, with the Public Domain Day a lot of copyrighted content entered the Public Domain. The ITU conference took place in Dubai back in December. We also go in on the origion of the word pirate and its connection to human knowledge.

As for the PPI, the board has made a decision on who will host the next general assembly. They decided for Kazan in Russia but the date isn\'t known yet, it will be released in the next two weeks.

We hope you enjoy these news and we\'re always happy for feedback, ideas or tips at contact@piratetimes.net

May 2013 bring even more good news than 2012,
The Pirates Times Team

Btw: You can also read the Pirate Times online at our blog or for offline reading just download the PDF version: %PDF_LINK%

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Restructuring the Belgian Pirate Party

On Saturday 22 December 2012 members of the Belgian Pirate Party met up for an extraordinary general assembly (EGA). This gathering was held in the Wallonian student city of Ottignies-Louvain-la-Neuve. This location was a symbolic choice, during the communal elections of 14 October the party reached 5.16%, its best result ever. Only 14 votes shy of our first city councillor.

The goal of this meeting was to expand the structure of the party. Since it's founding in 2009, the Belgian Pirate Party only functioned on the basis of some simple principles. The strong

growth the party went through since the beginning of 2012, made the current structure unworkable. Over 60 pirates were present. During the two months preceding the EGA, all members and sympathizers had the opportunity to submit proposals and amendments. From all this input no less than 170 items that needed to be voted where distilled out.

The whole meeting proceeded in a good, productive atmosphere without any major disagreements. Nevertheless it proved impossible to complete the very ambitious agenda. However, with about 100 points covered a big step forward was taken.

Some of the things covered were: the membership, the relationship between the party and its future elected representatives and the functioning of the local Crews, the organizational Squads and the national Coreteam. Members of this Coreteam, that will also be called the Admiralty from now on, will no longer be assigned specific functions.

Now a dedicated project squad will go to work to compile all the voted proposals and check the whole for consistency. The remaining points will be handled at the next general assembly planned for March. Maybe even more important than the voted proposal was the opportunity for pirates from the entire country to get to know each other.

Written by Koen De Voegt published at December 27, 2012

Pirates are Implementing the Experience of Human Knowledge

The English "Pirate" is derived from the Greek word "????????" (peirat?s) and this in turn from the verb "?????????" (peiráomai), "I attempt", which is a derivative of the noun "?????" (peîra), "experience".

Pirate indicates the investigator, the tester, is a key word for humanity and characterizes our species. Basically, we are all pirates, that?s what we do every day, we try for something new at all levels and thus we become more experienced. Everyday we attempt to do various things, make new friends, try new things, like a new haircut, new clothes, a new food that?s been suggested to us. In the field of politics, a Pirate tries something new, mixing statutes and principles of the available theories and practices, in his navigation for a better and more democratic world. And only then he becomes experienced, after having become a pirate, an experimenter, who has tried for something.

But what does the word "experience" mean? According to the ancient concept, something becomes experience when it is proved and tested. Physicists are directly related to experience. They are making experiments, trying to solve a problem and overcome the difficulty by changing an approach by doing something differently. An experiment is a test carried out carefully in order to gain knowledge. When knowledge comes then it can be tested and applied in various fields. In that way, Pirates examine the accepted data to discover new structures and form other alternative assumptions, using their inventive skills of analysis and synthesis.

The meaning of ?peiráomai? covers, conceptually, a Pirate. We are all Pirates in this perspective, because we like to mix things, theories and concepts, reality with fantasy and

utopia. We test, we look at whether something suits us, or anyone else. And through this process, we feel, we experience, we taste. We are all seekers! ?Peiráomai? means I try, I dare, I presume!

Coming from the depths of the centuries, the word ?pirate? took on another dimension in our days. The ruling classes saw pirates as rebels and hated them. Free spirits, who often acted in a reckless manner, their symbol was the incarnation of rebellion, disobedience and resistance. Rebels without a state, they were not submissive to any law, except from the laws they instituted themselves, improvising together and often acted like barbarians. The captain was subject to immediate recall but life in a pirate ship was certainly freer than life on board with the fleet.

The Pirate ideology moves upstream and tests ability and luck. This is the feeling of a Pirate: to attempt, to try to achieve something, to bring a new concept. Sometimes it goes beyond a certain point and perhaps exceeds certain limits, because it is an expression of challenge. And finds ways, finds passages, everywhere, attempting for something that has never been done before, and perhaps brash and off the beaten track, venturing ?the new?, suggesting something revolutionary.

Eventually, a pirate can be a tester, or a composer, or even more a remixer of the experience of human knowledge.

Picture: CC BY-SA 3.0 Piratenpartij Nederland

Written by Stathis Leivaditis published at December 30, 2012

Icelandic Authorities Blocking PiratePad as â€œHate-Speechâ€•

The Icelandic Pirate Party has confirmed their suspicions that the Reykjavik City authorities are blocking access to one of the party's collaboration platforms, namely PiratePad. Different versions of PiratePad are being used by several other Pirate Parties around the world. The city of Reykjavik uses content filtering software managed by the software giant Microsoft who have labelled PiratePad under the categories "hate-speech" and "computer crimes". Libraries and schools are among the current institutions blocking access to PiratePad in Iceland. PPIS member Bjartur Thorlacius said:

"This is just what we have noticed since before the recent holidays. It's almost guaranteed that other municipalities, organizations and companies that rely on Microsoft have blocked access to our information systems, knowingly or not.?

"This is one of the many reasons why we don't want to see internet censorship in general or network surveillance. Automatic censorship systems do not respect human values like freedom of speech. We are talking about a huge corporation using its momentum to block access to a political movement that it thinks threatens its status.?

Jón Gnarr's Best Party, who forms the majority in the Reykjavik City Hall together with the Social Alliance, has applied for observer membership in Pirate Parties International during 2012. Therefore it is surprising to find the city authorities are blocking access to a system used by Pirate Parties around the globe.

"One of the basic principles of the Pirate Party is that censorship should not happen in Iceland, no matter the cause. "PPIS Executive Commission member Enar Valur Ingimundarson told us, "We can't be more clear on this issue: Censorship is bad and we are against it. Let the data flow

freely."

If you are not familiar with the PiratePad it is an online collaboration tool based on Etherpad. It allows users to write on the same document in real time with individual contributors being identified by separate colours. A text chat facility gives further possibility to interact and can be used together with Mumble or other voice chat applications.

Concerning automatic censorship of legal pages Pirate Party members (and others) can help by regularly checking access from public institutions to their local Pirate Party web sites, wikis and pads. If any problems are found they should be reported to their Party's leadership and IT administrators. For example libraries in the USA, Australia and Denmark use content filters who might sometimes censor content wrongfully. You can also let concerned institutions know as they might not themselves be aware of the politically motivated blocking taking place in their name. Another obvious thing to do is to express your displeasure to the company using its content control software for political purposes.

Written by Andrew Reitemeyer published at January 5, 2013

Happy Public Domain Day!

On the first of January, the beginning of the new year is not the only thing to celebrate. The first of January is also known as "Public Domain Day". Due to the expiration of copyright protection terms on works produced by authors who died several decades earlier, thousands of works enter the public domain on this date. Although we Pirates think the current terms of copyright protection are exuberant, it's still worth taking a look a some of these old works that now

become a freely available part of our shared world heritage. Some of the authors are Stefan Zweig, Neel Doff and Grant Wood for example.

Currently copyrighted publications are protected from between 50 years to 70 years after the death of the author. However waiting a very long time for a work to be released isn't always enough. The current trend in legislation is to keep on extending the terms. In the United States, for example, the copyright act voted for in 1976 was extended by 20 years in 1998. This last extension is sometimes called the Mickey Mouse Protection Act. The effect is that no published American works will enter into the public domain until 2019. In 2011 the European Union extended the period of copyright protection for recordings from 50 to 70 year after release. Some works released in EU countries with shorter protection terms were even pulled back from the public domain because of this.

Our Swedish member European parliament Amelia Andersdotter is currently planning an event on this topic. If you know an author, musician, film-maker or other kind of creator whose work will come into the public domain in 2013, please head over to her site and lend a hand. For a more detailed view on how Pirates think about copyright I advise you to read through the book " Copyright Reform" by Rick Falkvinge and MEP Christian Engström.

Featured image CC-BY by Chris (tsuacctnt)

Written by Koen De Voegt published at January 5, 2013

Network neutrality: a French ISP attacks advertising

With the addition of an ad blocker to its set-top box and its default activation, the French ISP Free threatens the statu quo on network neutrality.

In a recent update to the firmware of its set-top box, the French ISP Free provides an add blocker. It is still in beta, but activated by default. It may seem to be a good initiative at first sight. After all, advertising on websites can be really annoying and many people are using ad blockers such as the Adblock add-on to get rid of this nuisance. So why should it be a problem? And why does it face criticisms from many Internet actors?

A threat to ad-supported sites

Since the rise of online advertising in the 1990s, it has been the main source of income for most free websites[1]. While it may seem to be a nuisance, free radio stations and televisions channels have been using the same business model for decades, with little opposition. Without advertising, many free websites might suffer considerable loss of income, which could result either in a shift of business model from advertising-supported to donation-supported. Regardlessly of one's opinion of the advertising-supported business model, should it be up to Free to decide whether websites should use it?

A slippery slope to network partiality

Free has since long been infamous for its slow transfer rates with YouTube and for peer-to-peer file transfer networks and is facing plaints from French consumer union UFC-Que Choisir for its unwillingness to address them. Now, by filtering advertisement without informing its users, it poses another threat to network neutrality. If this ad blocker is kept activated by default, the next step could be to make it mandatory, or to extend it to other contents and charge for its deactivation. Free has already made it clear that net neutrality was not in their agenda, and this could be the beginning of a slippery slope to a severe network partiality.

But there are already countless ad blockers!

The existing ad blockers, such as AdBlock are not provided by default in most configurations. They are installed knowingly by their users and allow whitelisting and other selective filtering of advertisements. The main issues of this ad blocker is its activation by default, without even informing the users of the Freebox and its blind filtering, without any mean of allowing selected advertisements. In the contrary, since most non-technical users probably won't notice it or won't bother to deactivate, this ad blocker will affect the online advertising for the majority of the so-called Freenautes. Moreover, through its triple play offers, Free is also a television provider, and could filter the television advertisement in the same way.

An arm-wrestling with Google?

As already stated, Free has already willingly dismissed complaints from its customers about its bad support of Google video service YouTube, advising its customers to use Dailymotion instead, and more recently, its Video On Demand services. Since Google is the main online advertisement network, through Google Syndication and DoubleClick, this measure impacts it more than any other society. Moreover, it seems that while advertisements are filtered on YouTube, it is not the case for Dailymotion.

Incidentally, the fight over YouTube has been going on for months, with Free urging Google to
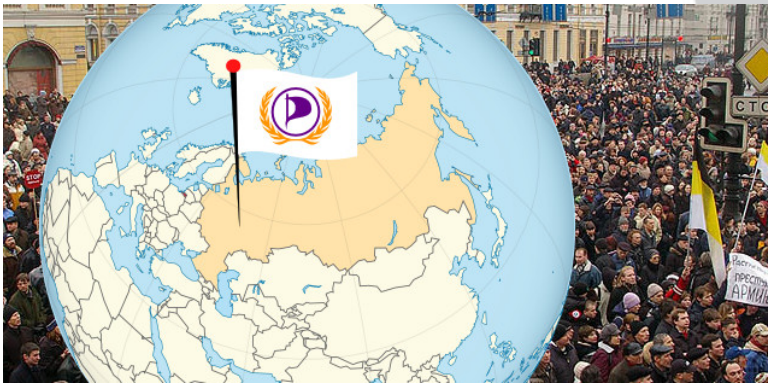
invest in infrastructures and Google arguing that the performance of networks were the responsibility of ISPs. With the filing of a plaint against Free by UFC-Que Choisir in November, this ad blocker might just be an attempt to force Google to change its position?

[1]with the notable exception of Wikipedia, whose only source of income is donation.

Picture CC-BY-NC-SA FreePress

Written by Loïc Grobol published at January 7, 2013

Pirate Party Russia hosts upcoming PPI Assembly

The upcoming General Assembly of Pirate Party International (PPI) will be held in Kazan, Russia. So decided the PPI board on January 8 2013. The conference will be held in a weekend in April and will be the first one held outside of the European Union.

This successful proposal was competing with other proposals from Kaliningrad in Russia, Paris in France and from Potsdam in Germany. The board settled on Kazan with three votes for, none against and two abstentions. The GA will vote on applications from Pirate Parties for full or observer membership. It will also vote in a new board and a new Court of Arbitration.

Kazan can be reached via direct flights from Istanbul, Prague, Munich and Frankfurt. Over night trains via Moscow are also available. In Kazan, the conference location will be in an IT-valley with an internet exchange point in the same building, so the technical requirements for streaming are satisfied. Piraten Streaming has already offered to sponsor a streaming server for

the GA.

Global Internet Surveillance â€" all for the protection of copyright?

In December, the ITU "World Conference on International Telecommunications" was held in Dubai. The ITU (International Telecommunication Union) is a specialized agency of the United Nations, having over 190 states as members. Numerous controversial proposals find their way onto its desk.

Due to pressure from some states, the ITU proposed to decree Deep Packet Inspection for enabling the prosecution of copyright violations and to strengthen copyright itself. Thus, an effective tool for internet censorship would be crafted.

The non-public draft of standard Y.2770 (Requirements for Deep Packet Inspection in Next Generation Networks) has been encouraged by China and further declared in a document of a Korean standardization organization. It promises that in this way the searching for and discovery of copyright violations could be eased. The ITU-T, the ITU standardization group, has been voting affirmatively for this draft.

Amongst others, Alissa Cooper and Emma Llansó from the Center for Democracy and Technology accuse the UN agency in a blogpost of ignoring the privacy and security of internet users. The ITU-T would have approved of such a technology with no debate, which would enable inquiring about the whole internet traffic of a specific user. Access to e-mails, bank accounts and telephone conversations would be possible with no respect for privacy. Even the investigation of encrypted communication would be enabled.

The standard has been signed by 89 delegations, 55 declined to sign at that time. Many of the declining delegations announced they would consider it "at home" first and then to decide after. It is alarming, that such resolutions made are apparently not seen as problematical at first sight.

A clear signal would be a boycott of the proposal by Germany, as the United States has done. US delegation leader Terry Kramer stated right after the vote, that the United States could not support a standard, which is not strengthening the "Multi Stakeholder Model" (an alliance of interest between economy, administration and science). The current system of internet administration by ICANN and ISOC, both non-governmental organizations, shall be retained and strengthened. The United Kingdom and many European states seconded, not so Germany. A clearer positioning of Germany in this issue had been possible, but seemed not to be in the interest of its current government. Telecommunication law in the federal republic has been intensified and enables the local authorities today to more easily monitor a citizen in Germany.

Through the regulations from the new ITU standard, the step to the transparent citizen would have been made. The hopefully upcoming debate around the standard should be held in interest of every internet user and a resulting boycott would be a clear result.

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This article was originally written for the Flaschenpost by Guide Herzog.

Written by Dominic Guhl published at January 10, 2013

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