

National

'Nobody thought of making Web secure'

Philip Leone-Ganado

The internet is now subject to "universal spying" and not using encryption is like "writing all your private communications on post-cards", one of the internet's pioneers has warned.

"In the early days, the goal was just to make it work. Nobody was thinking of how to make it secure," said Louis Pouzin, a French computer communications expert recognised as one of the five 'fathers of the internet'.

"Using encryption is a way of making it more costly and difficult to be spied on, but there's no guarantee that our system is totally protected from spying. The most secure system can at some point be broken."

Mr Pouzin, famed for developing an innovative data network in the early 1970s that laid the groundwork for the internet of today, was in Malta for a conference organised by the Diplo Foundation on internet governance.

Speaking yesterday, he expressed his concern that the influence of companies like Google and Facebook - mostly based in the US - was destroying the internet's early ideals of openness and transparency.

"The commercialisation of the internet was a deliberate government policy; by relying on their giant commercial firms, the US ensured they could control the whole world," he said.

"We have to find ways to control the development. We can no



French computer communications expert Louis Pouzin is recognised as one of the fathers of the internet. Photo: Jason Borg

"By relying on their giant commercial firms, the US ensured they could control the whole world"

longer be pushed around by a few US companies."

Mr Pouzin warned that spying technology would only increase in the years to come, and that a system of "walls" or "filters" was

needed to challenge an American-led hegemony.

"Global internet is based on an obsolete system of global power by one country. One approach is to subdivide the internet into more

manageable pieces," he said, pointing to the possibility of national sovereignty over different corners of the internet.

Mr Pouzin added that the current "monopoly" of domain names, whereby only one entity is allowed to make use of a given domain, is a further "means of control" based on an outdated notion of scarcity.

Moreover, since domain names feature only Western scripts, he said, some two-thirds of the world's population is excluded.

"The way to protect a unique name is a trademark, not the internet," he said.

Also speaking at the conference, Joe Cannataci, head of the Department of Information Policy and Governance at the University of Malta, said innovative legislative instruments could be needed to tackle new realities like cyberwar.

"At the moment we have a number of 'cyber-skirmishes'. In the same space as people using Google and Facebook, we have people stealing secrets and testing power stations to see if they can be brought down."

Meanwhile, Alex Sceberas Trigona, a special envoy to the World Trade Organisation, spoke of the need to consider the internet as the "common heritage of mankind", drawing comparisons to the Antarctic and the seas beyond national jurisdictions.

"The internet is a new territory that has been created. Is it one where a single sovereign state is going to plant its flag or are there competing flags?"

American university eyes Malta campus

An American university is expected to open a campus in Malta catering for 4,000 students, TVM has reported.

Prime Minister Joseph Muscat spoke of this investment for the first time last Sunday during a political meeting in Nadur, without giving any details.

Attempts to get more information over the past few days proved futile, with the government keeping its cards close to its chest.

The national broadcaster yesterday said the De Paul University of Chicago would be running the Malta campus, which would be situated somewhere in the south. The investment is expected to run into millions of euros, and the first intake of 1,000 students is reportedly expected to take place in October 2016. An agreement

"College aims to have 3,000 students by 2018, mainly from Commonwealth countries, the Middle East, North Africa and Asia"

between the government and the American university is expected to be signed in the coming days.

If it materialises, this will be the second investment since the start of the year by foreign private universities in Malta.

In February the government signed an agreement with Barts medical school, a branch of London's Queen Mary University. The medical school is expected to operate from the grounds of the Gozo General Hospital and will cater for 300 foreign-paying students over a five-year period. The first intake of 60 students will happen in October 2016.

Two years ago a British higher education facility, Global College, opened its doors at Smart City.

The college offers British style Master's degrees in key sectors such as oil and gas, IT and management. The college aims to have 3,000 students on campus by 2018, mainly from Commonwealth countries, the Middle East, North Africa and Asia.

The UK-based Middlesex University opened a campus in Pembroke in 2013, making it only the second university on the island. The opening of the Pembroke campus strengthened a six-year collaboration Middlesex had going in Malta.

It offers business, computing and finance courses at undergraduate and post-graduate levels.

JRS head earns human dignity prize

Human rights' champion Katrine Camilleri was last night awarded an international human dignity award for her "long-standing and successful commitment to refugee rights".

Dr Camilleri, a lawyer and director of the Jesuit Refugee Service in Malta, went to Berlin, Germany, yesterday to collect the Roland Berger Human Dignity Award 2014/15.

The award, in its sixth edition, goes to people and organisations from around the world who have distinguished themselves by taking an exemplary stand for human dignity. This year the award focused on the subject of refugees.

"With this year's award we are paying tribute to the extraordinary dedication of two courageous women who campaign tirelessly for refugee rights"

Dr Camilleri collected the award during a ceremony held at the Jewish Museum in Berlin. The other two winners for this year were Eritrean-Italian human rights activist Alganesc Fessaha and the Congolese school organisation *Petite Flamme*. She has headed the Jesuit Refugee Service since 2011, which she joined in 1996.

In April 2006 her car and the front door of her Sliema home were torched in an arson attack. Although nobody was caught, it was suspected



Katrine Camilleri receives her award last night from Romano Prodi, former president of the European Commission. Photo: Roland Berger Foundation

to have been linked to the anti-migrant sentiment on the island at the time.

For almost two decades, the 45-year-old has helped provide legal advice and moral support to thousands of boat people who have survived the dangerous journey across the Mediterranean and made it to Malta.

She also lectures in refugees' rights and has coordinated a study group on the subject at the University of Malta since 2003.

She was honoured by the United Nations with the Nansen Refugee Award for her commitment to the rights of boat people in the Mediterranean in 2007. Award founder Roland Berger, the successful businessman behind the

foundation that organises the awards, said yesterday the topic of refugees was selected this year as it was one of the "most pressing problems of our times".

"Last year alone, tragic boat accidents in the Mediterranean claimed 3,500 lives. According to the United Nations Refugee Agency, almost 51.2 million people worldwide are currently fleeing unbearable situations.

"Many of them are trying to get to Europe and Germany... With this year's Roland Berger Human Dignity Award we are paying tribute to the extraordinary dedication of two courageous women who campaign tirelessly for the protection of refugee rights," he said.