

## EU on the digital road to growth?

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Special Report

Dods EU Monitoring takes a look at the upcoming digital single market strategy.



On 6 May, the European commission is due to launch its long-awaited digital single market strategy. The strategy is going to address several issues that constitute hurdles to a fully integrated European digital market, such as varying broadband connections, diverging data protection rules, geo-blocking and different VAT systems.

Commission vice-president for the digital single market Andrus Ansip and digital economy and society commissioner Günter Oettinger are leading a team of 12 of their colleagues who will work on drafting the strategy.

According to the commission, achieving an integrated market for digital services would be of great benefit to the EU economy. It could provide €340bn in additional growth and save consumers €11.7bn per year if they were able to purchase online goods and services from across all 28 member states.

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At present, EU cross-border services online only make up four per cent of the global digital market, while a mere seven per cent of EU SMEs are selling online.

Last month, the commission outlined three key areas of focus for the strategy: *Better access for consumers and businesses to digital goods and services, Shaping the environment for digital networks and services to flourish and Creating a European digital economy and society with long-term growth potential.*

Increasing cross-border eCommerce, reviewing telecom and media legislation, as well as increasing the use of new technologies, are areas that have already been touched upon under the digital agenda - the first flagship initiative of the Europe 2020 strategy.

Despite the commission being on track to complete 95 of its 101 digital actions - according to its 2014 scoreboard - there remain discrepancies between the individual member states.

Many stakeholders have been expressing their wishes and concerns on the strategy to the commission via workshops, chat sessions and the Digital4EU website.

The extent to which the points of views of consumers and the industry will be reflected in the final document remains to be seen, but one of the most debated and sensitive issues ahead of its publication is the commission's intention to modernise the EU's 2001 copyright directive.

A decisive factor in shaping the future of the creative industry, the copyright review is one of the building blocks of the digital single market.

The creation of a truly digital single market will take time and effort from both policymakers and stakeholders. The strategy, however, can provide the boost the EU urgently needs in order to re-invent itself on the digital scene.

*This article is an extract from a Dods Monitoring EU whitepaper: [The EU Digital Road to Growth?](#) [4]*

*This is the second of four briefings put together by Dods Monitoring as supporting partner of [the European Business Summit 2015](#) [5]*



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