

Final 31.03.2004



IST-2001-34908

CCform project

Consumer Complaint FORM for online resolution mechanisms

<http://www.complaintsplatform.org> or <http://www.complaintsplatform.com>

1 June 2002- 31 January 2004

Edited Final Public Report

Deliverable Nature:	Report
Security Class:	Public
Document Type:	Deliverable
CEC Deliverable Number:	1.6
Contractual Date of Delivery to the CEC:	st March 31 2004
Actual Date of Delivery to the CEC:	th March 31 2004
Document Title:	Deliverable 1.6
Source Workpackage/Activity:	WP 1/6
Editor:	CCform Project Team
Status / Issue:	Final
Date Last changes:	March 31, 2004
File:	CCform Public Report_final.doc
Abstract:	This document represents the edited final report of the CCform project.



Key data

Project name: Consumer Complaint FORM for online resolution mechanisms

Total Budget : €594,591 **Total expenses:** €664515, **Total EC funding :** € 594,591

Keywords : online Consumer Complaints Resolution Mechanisms, reference model for multilingual complaint forms , Best practices, e-confidence

Research Area : Ontology, Complaint management process

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Short description

The main objective of CCform is to support the creation of online Consumer Complaints Resolution Mechanisms (CCRM) by developing a **standard but extensible form and business process (CCform) which has widespread industry and consumer support**. The form and process must facilitate cross-language communication to support cross-border e-commerce and be capable of

easy implementation in software. CCform will both raise the basic standard of complaints management and be extended by individual firms to provide sector solutions and competitive advantage. CCform proposes to establish a recommended reference model for multilingual complaint forms and a set of recommended operating guidelines within a legal package to be utilised by any companies using e-Commerce or traditional selling. The form can also be used in any regulated sector, administration or governments. Taking into account that Consumers have difficulties with complaints in a cross-border environment and lack confidence in online shopping and that Companies have no best practice for complaints and they lack confidence in the legal environment for cross-border e-business, the CCform proposes the creation of an online consumer complaint form. The form and process must facilitate voicing of complaints, cross-language communication to support cross-border e-commerce and be capable of easy implementation in software. CCform will raise business standards.

The major work in the project was to perfect the reference model for the complaint form. (i) Initial drafting of the complaint form and legal package provided a strong base for the working groups to build consensus around. (ii) The 6 working groups discussed in topic panels the critical issues such as: perfection of the form, business process and legal package best to meet those issues and build a consensus for a recommendation, creation of an Oversight Surveillance Committee in charge of making sure the CCform rules are respected. (iii) A first complaint form was posted on the internet site of the project and tested amongst end users. It led to the finalisation of a second standard form, easier to complete and more user friendly. (iv) The conclusions of the Topic Panels and of the different discussions with end users were used as the basis to write the User Guides and the Code of Conduct. These documents are now publicly available under www.complaintsplatform.org. (v) The results of the project were presented in four national Conferences in January 2004: in Brussels, The Hague, London and Paris.

Results and achievements

1) A demonstration of an online and multilingual complaint form. This web site contains information for the end users: - The complainant: so that he can easily voice his/her complaint, find tips to ensure his rights, find useful links and information. - The recipient: to improve its complaint management handling. A demonstration of the standard complaint form can be viewed under: www.complaintsplatform.org or www.complaintsplatform.com. These sites aim to validate the model and find demonstrate the validity of the concepts. This form can be then personalised and extended.

2) A User Guide for the Consumers and a User Guide for the companies, with the Code of conduct attached. These documents are available in the 11 official languages of the EU. They can be viewed on the CCform web site. Work description: The major work in the project is to perfect the reference model for the complaint form. Initial drafting of the complaint form and legal package provided a strong base for the working groups to build consensus around. The 6 topic panels discussed the critical issues such as: perfection of the form, business process and legal package to best meet those issues and build a consensus for a recommendation; creation of an Oversight Surveillance Committee in charge of making sure the CCform rules are respected. The first complaint form was tested amongst end users, and this led to the finalisation of a second standard form, easier to complete and more user friendly. The conclusions of the Topic Panels and of the different discussions with end

users were used as the basis to write the User Guides and the Code of Conduct. These documents are now publicly available under www.complaintsplatform.org. The results of the project were presented in four national Conferences in January 2004: in Brussels, The Hague, London and Paris.

3) A first Use plan for a future exploitation of the CCform, under the model of a non-profit Association / Foundation (registered in the UK as a non-profit company, called European Complaints Platform Limited, registration number 5023087) has been prepared by the Consortium. Pilots to test and validate the projects have been found, and will start to implement the CCform complaint form in 2004 onwards.

Approach

One intention has been to show that implementing a common access CCform-based service on a European scale is an achievable and desirable objective worthy of European Union institutional support. Another intention is to inform companies, government agencies and NGOs that such a multi-lingual, extensible, cross-border capable complaint process can be created, to describe how organisations can benefit from implementing CCform-based solutions, and to encourage them to make the necessary investments in policies, systems and procedures to achieve better complaint management. A third intention is to inform consumers that such a multi-lingual complaint process can be made available by companies, to inform them of the benefits they can expect from using CCform, and to encourage them to demand CCform services from companies, governments and NGOs. A fourth intention is to create and run an Association in charge of exploiting the CCform in 2004. This Association was formally created mid January 2004. This Association will subcontract service providers to find licensees. The business model is based on that of Trust UK. It consists of a non-profit making entity which would raise money by selling licenses, using the funds to improve the system and to develop other relevant services such as studies. CCform will set principles for complaint management, hence improving its credibility and the improvement of complaint management standards.

Plan or the future

Exploitation will be assured by the creation of a non-profit organisation or foundation to exploit the consensus achieved by the CCform EU IST thematic project. By implementing principles widely used by trustmark accreditation agencies, it proposes to issue license agreements to organisations (either membership or subscriber bodies), which adopt the CCform Foundation's core principles. Monitoring compliance with a rigorous Code of Conduct will ensure that the Foundation is able to ensure high standards in member companies' complaints handling procedures. Thus at present some of those involved in the project, lead by Xprise and others, are preparing E-Ten projects to develop business/marketing models; two associations are looking at exploiting the system naturally and a number of companies and organisation have indicated that they will either apply the CCform process, or, in one case, produce a software solution package for exploitation.

Further collaboration, dissemination and use of the result

Licence agreement, Marketing agreement, establishment of a partnership and further research or development