

A catalyst for cyber security

Story by



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Huawei's openness is promoting discussion about cyber security in Europe

Although the security of telecommunications networks and equipment is presently the topic of much political and media scrutiny, it is not a new phenomenon. The subject has always been the focus of hearty debate and the centre of trade discussions. It has, after all, always been the technology that connects or separates people and nations.

Back in 1995 - 24 years ago - the EU was embroiled in a very serious discussion about which technology it should adopt in the years to come; in fact, as we are seeing now, it was about the decades to come.

Then EU Commissioner Karel Van Miert was charged with negotiating with all EU countries about which technology they should select. There was intense lobbying

and pressure on the EU from the US, which wanted to see IS-95 or TDMA confirmed as the European choice. Siemens and Alcatel had ETAC, Nokia and Ericsson had GSM, while, not to be forgotten, Japan had its own proprietary system.

Europe was having a very significant influence on the development of the market and, as we can see now, its choice was implemented globally. But some European countries were forced to adopt technologies that did not follow the EU recommendations, and the reasons given were trade and security. Years later, they found that in the end they had to adopt the EU selected technology, but the deviation cost them a lot of money and resources.

Learning from the past

So, where are we now? In truth, the present situation does not seem to be very far removed to what the EU experienced nearly a quarter a century ago. The question must be asked: has the EU learned from the past?

Huawei and Europe have come a long way together. Thirty years ago, Huawei was only just beginning to think of Europe, not from the garage maybe, but certainly the living room. The company missed out completely on 2G, but afterwards, thanks to its huge growth as an international private company, which now has 180 000 employees (12,200 on European soil), next year Huawei will be celebrating its 20th anniversary as an established ICT vendor and solutions provider in Europe.

Meanwhile, in parallel with its development in Europe, Huawei has also been evolving alongside cyber security technology.

It took its first decision to establish a company-wide Cybersecurity Policy as early as 1999. By 2003, it had expanded this to embrace its partners and partnering in the supply chain. Huawei has not invented its own cyber security - or developed it on Chinese soil; impossible in this day and age, when you consider all the competence centres Huawei has created worldwide over the years. Cyber security, and transparency in this area, is a truly global concern, and it has been for many years.

Catalyst for EU cyber security debate

Huawei has been acting as catalyst when it comes to the European cyber security discussion. This is excellent news, since the discussion should already have taken place a long time ago.

The current debate has automatically turned Huawei into part of the European cyber security solution and, while we can take credit from this discussion, assessment of the needs has only just begun.

What we have seen so far from this assessment is that Huawei is not actually the problem. Naturally, we have been a target, but the result is, happily, that we are now in a position to prove that 5G networks can be built in a very secure way, one which will cover other providers, too.

There is still much work to do. As a vendor, Huawei is researching the development of technology and cyber security side by side, but another equally important part of the equation is education. In this context, the education of governments and industry.

We have thus published a new Huawei 5G Security White Paper, which should give a basic understanding of what you can expect from 5G and why.

The White Paper has been divided into several sections, all building understanding from top to bottom:

1. Why 5G is secure
2. Why Huawei's 5G is secure
3. How to ensure 5G security in networks
4. How to continuously improve 5G security and, last but not least,
5. The collaboration needed.

So, let's start now... building trust and restoring hope... so that together we take the right decisions now, for the decades to come.