

19th Bled eConference

eValues

Bled, Slovenia, June 5 - 7, 2006

**eSilk & eAmber Road Regions Meeting: Business
and Government Executives & Professors'
Commitment to Making A Difference**

Co-chairs:

Douglas R. Vogel

Professor & Chair of Information Systems Department of Information Systems, City University of
Hong Kong, SAR, China

Jože Gričar

Professor & eCenter Director, Faculty of Organizational Sciences, University of Maribor, Slovenia

Discussants:

Niels Bjoern-Andersen

Professor & Director, Center for Electronic Commerce, Department of Informatics, Copenhagen
Business School, Denmark

Wiesław Czyżowicz

Professor of Customs Policy and Law & Head, Business Law Department, Warsaw School of
Economics, Poland

Dragan Čišić

Associate Professor & Vice Dean for Research and Technology,
Faculty of Maritime Studies, University of Rijeka, Croatia

Antti Eskola

Commercial Counsellor, Ministry of Trade and Industry, Finland

Janez Gabrijelčič

Consultant, Chair, Annual Forum on Excellence and Mastery, Otočec, Society of Economists of Dolenjska and Bela Krajina, Slovenia

Primož Gričar

Project Manager, Oracle Software d.o.o., Slovenia

Wilfried Grommen

General Manager, Business Strategy EMEA HQ, Microsoft

Gerhard Laga

eCenter Manager, Department Strategies, The Austrian Federal Economic Chamber, Austria

Klemen Prešeren

Director, Gorenje Skandinavien A/S, Denmark

Yao-Hua Tan

Professor of Electronic Business, Department of Economics and Business Administration, Vrije University Amsterdam, The Netherlands & Coordinator, ITAIDE - Information Technology for Adoption and Intelligent Design for eGovernment, Integrated Project of The European Community, 6th Framework Programme

Objectives of the meeting are to:

- Establish contact with like-minded people: researchers, administrators, policy makers and advisers, businessmen, and other stakeholders.
- Raise awareness among such people of contemporary issues related to eCommerce. Begin building a network of institutional links and researchers for further collaboration in joint activities.
- Obtain first hand experience with existing applications of eCommerce in the Region.
- Establish an indication of the level of awareness of eCommerce issues and opportunities in the Silk & Amber Road regions.

- Identify opportunities for continued collaborative research into problems and possibilities for expanding eCommerce in the region.
- Stimulate inter-university cooperation in eCommerce along the eAmber & eSilk Road. Suggest an agenda for future collaborative research and development activities intended to further the aims of the meeting.

The old Silk Road and Amber Route are historical artifacts with reborn contemporary significant. The Amber Route wound its way from the Baltic countries in Eastern Europe to Venice that, also, was a terminus of the Silk Road albeit in a somewhat different time frame. The Amber Route was a Roman-age commercial route in the general 200 BC – 200 AD timeframe. The old Silk Road was a historical trade route (with its zenith in the 7-9th century) linking Asia and Europe that changed the nature of commerce in the medieval and renaissance world. Today, as in ancient times, these roads are a study in contrasts. These historical trading routes have commonalities yet distinctions both in the past and present and, perhaps, on into the future.

Re-establishment of business and government relations on the nodes of the Silk Road and Amber Route towards creation of eAmber & eSilk Roads presents both challenges and opportunities.

Challenges common to both the renewed Amber and Silk roads are many. Culture and tradition vary dramatically. Awareness of the past, much less future potential, requires attention. Infrastructure elements along some parts of the roads are mature and futuristic while, along other parts, have far to go to merely catch up with modern times. Economic viability needs to be carefully examined as multiple choices and alternatives now exist that, clearly, were not present in ancient times. Political conventions give way to numerous forms of governance. Business procedures vary widely under differing government rules and regulations. Overall feasibility comes into question as to the ability of individuals, organizations and countries to achieve a degree of cooperation necessary to facilitate effective establishment of eAmber and eSilk roads.

Although the challenges are many, however, the potential rewards are great. Common opportunities are based around the Internet – the fastest diffusing technology in the history of the world – with a presence in over 200 countries. The Internet provides an opportunity for us to regain our awareness of these regions and the goods and services that they can provide in a renaissance of the Silk Road and Amber Route. Based on the backbone of the Internet and associated telecommunications capability, aspects of intelligent logistics become reality. Numerous forms of collaboration exist. Some are oriented around business models whereby multiple partners win through cooperation and achieve synergy. Other collaborations between government agencies both within and between countries open new opportunities.

In the spirit of a revived Amber Route and Silk Road, we envision an eAmber & eSilk Road. Towards that end we will hold a series of meetings and sustained interactions to explore opportunities, remove uncertainties and addresses challenges. We expect to enable electronic commerce in those countries and cities that once were famous, and may prove again to be, through involvement of stakeholders with knowledge and an outlook towards the future.

eSilk & eAmber Road Regions Meeting, Discussion Outline

The world has changed dramatically these past years and it is time to look back to the future. This meeting is planned as a “think-tank” for idea exchange. Discussants have been asked to provide a short vision (5 minutes) suggesting WHAT could be done and

HOW to further advance cooperation in the eRegion development in the countries on the Silk and Amber road in the next 12 to 24 months – cooperation not just between states and institutions but also between peoples. Perhaps there are potentials for a joint research project. Suggestions on how to prepare for a project proposal action are welcome.

The 2007 Bled eConference will be an exciting opportunity to meet and discuss results and plans once again (20th Bled eConference “eMergence: Merging and Emerging Technologies, Processes, and Institutions”, June 18-20, 2007). The ideas provided in the meeting will be considered in the program development.

Julia Glidden and Douglas R. Vogel are the rapporteurs of the meeting. They will provide a text draft to be reviewed by the meeting’s discussants and published at the conference’s web site after the conference.

Here are some relevant websites contributing to an insight into various related activities and projects:

- The New Silk Road , TRACECA – TRAnsport Corridor Europe Caucasus Asia,
- Asia signs up to 'new Silk Road'. BBC News, Monday, 26 April, 2004
- Re-building the ancient Silk Road. China Daily, by Fu Jing, 2004-09-01
- EU-China Information Society Project
- The TeleRegions Network (TRN)
- NeDAP - Northern eDimension eGovernment Action Plan
- Regional Policy - Inforegio
- The Central European Initiative – CEI
- ALADIN – ALpe ADria INitiative Universities’ Network
- Virtual Silk Highway Project
- UN World Tourism Organization Silk Road Project