



photo: Sebastiaan Ter Burg



**Neelie Kroes**  
EU Commissioner for the Digital  
Agenda

At the end of September, the EU Commissioner for the Digital Agenda, Neelie Kroes, revealed her plans for promoting cloud computing in Europe. In her presentation 'Unleashing the potential of cloud computing in Europe', Ms Kroes said that the first and most important step towards a digital market was to create a "cloud-friendly" Europe. Despite the economic and other advantages of cloud computing, many organisations have their doubts about it, for example concerning the security of their files. In order to increase confidence in the cloud, one of Ms Kroes's proposals is for an EU-wide system of shared technical standards, certificates, and

legal guarantees, as well as fair terms and conditions. It is emphatically not the intention for Europe to develop its own "European super cloud", but public cloud services will need to comply with European standards for security, openness, and competition. Ms Kroes is making ten million euros available to implement the plans. By collaborating in the context of SURF, the Dutch higher education sector has a unique position that will enable it to lead the way with this development and to influence European policy. SURF is continuing to formulate shared requirements for cloud services and to negotiate those requirements with the market.

## Digital learning and working environments and cloud computing

CLOUD COMPUTING OFFERS MAJOR BENEFITS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION AND RESEARCH THAT IS DEFINITELY THE CASE WITH GENERIC ICT SERVICES THAT FORM PART OF THE DIGITAL LEARNING AND WORKING ENVIRONMENT (DLWE).

Every educational institution has a combination of digital services that it has organised itself. The users of that DLWE are a mix of students, instructors, support staff, managers, policymakers, and researchers. The DLWE is constantly changing so as to continue to meet the expectations of users and the changing demands of education. The increasingly central role played by ICT within educational organisations is also leading to a different overall view as regards the use of the DLWE, and technological developments are causing the importance and possibilities of information governance to be viewed in a new light.

### Publication

To help institutions plan for the future of the DLWE, and to develop an overall approach and a sourcing strategy, a publication has been prepared in the framework of SURF's Education@DLWE [*Onderwijs@DLWO*] programme. SURF's aim with that publication is to encourage the thinking about the DLWE and to make recommendations for how institutions can deal with the changes resulting from changing user requirements, didactics, quality of information, and information governance and sourcing.

### Sourcing

A rapidly increasing number of cloud-based ICT services are suitable as components of the DLWE. Higher education institutions can benefit greatly from making the right sourcing choices. By doing so, they can also achieve certain strategic goals, for example greater flexibility or personalisation of the DLWE. But there are also challenges involved in acquiring DLWE services from the cloud. The management bodies at

higher education institutions must therefore take strategic decisions as regards the further development of their DLWE. The publication, which will be presented at this year's Education Days, can help them to do so. The consultation meeting for Executive Board members on 14 November will also go into this matter in detail.

### Data Protection Authority clarifies matters regarding cloud and privacy

At the request of SURF, the Dutch Data Protection Authority [*College Bescherming Persoonsgegevens, CBP*] has published an opinion on cloud computing and the protection of personal data. The European Commission has already determined that the "Safe Harbor Principles" applied by US providers of cloud services offer an "appropriate level of protection" when personal data is transferred. This does not guarantee, however, that the actual storage and processing of that data in the United States in fact complies with all the requirements of Dutch privacy legislation. The CBP has now confirmed that a Dutch customer that utilises cloud services remains responsible for compliance with the legislation and will need to make sure when concluding agreements for cloud services that the applicable legal requirements are in fact complied with.

The CBP's Opinion confirms that the Dutch higher education sector has adopted the right approach. Working together in the context of SURF enables institutions to conclude supplementary agreements with providers of

### Cloud Computing consultation meeting in Rotterdam on 14 November 2012

During the Education Days event at the WTC in Rotterdam, there will be another SURF consultation meeting exclusively for Executive Board members (5.00 p.m. on 14 November). As in 2011, those attending will be brought up to date on developments, and specifically on the cloud aspects of digital learning and working environments. There will be ample scope for discussion.

cloud services, for example on what measures the provider will take so as to guarantee proper implementation in practice, and how the customer can monitor this. Over the next few months, SURF's Cloud Taskforce will make proposals for a Framework of Legal Standards for Cloud Services in Higher Education that takes account of the CBP's remarks.

An explanation (by SURF's Cloud Taskforce) of the CBP's Opinion can be found [here](#).

