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## Senior figures tackle the European eChallenges head-on



A global line up of ICT experts met in Ljubljana, Slovenia, last month for the annual eChallenges event.

eChallenges 2005 attracted over 590 delegates from 46 countries and 5 continents, representing government (23 per cent), industry (17 per cent), high-tech SMEs (12 per cent) and research/academic organisations (48 per cent). Opened by Dr Jure Zupan, Minister for Higher Education, Science and Technology, Slovenia and closed by Dr Janez Potocnik, European Commissioner for Science and Research, keynote speakers from Slovenia, Belgium, Ireland, Netherlands, USA and Japan, shared insights into current applied ICT challenges in government, business and research.

Zupan stressed that challenges lie in linking the research and industry sectors to allow solutions to be implemented in the shortest time possible. Joao da Silva of the European Commission's Directorate General for the Information Society and Media meanwhile, said that more should be invested in the field, as ICT is one of the basic factors of development and progress in the EU.

Other speakers included: Noriyuki Yonemura of Fuji Xerox, who presented a concept of the office of the future; Christopher Horn of IONA Technologies who discussed improvements to eBusiness in Europe; and Ingo Juraske of Hewlett-Packard spoke on eGovernment projects.

Jeff Rhoda, Vice President Global On-Demand Business, IBM (pictured), was also at eChallenges and told eStrategies: "We've been involved with eChallenges since it began. It's a great opportunity to react intensely with leaders on the various topics that are being discussed."

He added: "No question, we're very involved in Europe, it's a huge part of our business. Europe is actually leading in a number of the key areas, including things like privacy, so if you want to talk about activities in areas like that then this is the place you're going to find the people who are leading it."

Next year's eChallenges event will take place in Barcelona, Spain in October 2006.

**\* eStrategies held an eHealth roundtable discussion alongside the eChallenges event in Ljubljana. Healthcare experts from both the private and public sectors discussed the key IT issues that they face in the region. Full coverage of the discussion can be found in the forthcoming issue of eStrategies Central & Eastern Europe.**

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