

**HUAWEI:  
DIGITAL SELF-DETERMINATION MUST BE  
FOUGHT FOR AND SECURED ANEW  
EVERY DAY**

*Interview with Andy Wang, CEO Huawei Switzerland*

*Self-determination is in the hands of our customers. We never take this away from them in any way. Security in cyberspace is a complex and multifaceted topic. No one can guarantee 100 percent security at all times. Anyone who does this is simply not honest. However, what we at Huawei can guarantee is that our customers constantly and repeatedly put our systems through their paces, that they can test and externally audit us.*

*Andy Wang*

**Andy Wang<sup>310</sup>, security concerns and allegations of data espionage are being raised against Huawei in various countries, because**

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<sup>310</sup> Original text published in German: *Digitale Selbstbestimmung muss jeden Tag neu erkämpft und gesichert werden. Transparenz als Grundlage der Existenz*, in: Marc Furrer (Ed.), *Selbstbestimmt. Sind Souveräne Kommunikationsnetze in der Schweiz möglich?*, Stämpfli Verlag, Bern, 2022, 97-100. Published in

**Huawei, as a Chinese company, is not supposed to be independent of Chinese government intervention. What do you think?**

Sure, we are a company founded in China. But we have been operating as an international company in over 170 countries for over 20 years. In Europe alone, Huawei employs around 14,000 people and operates 25 research centres. We never had security problems. The allegations made are politically motivated and simply not tenable. Because nobody is as transparent as we are. And we can prove that.

**Give us proof.**

Just imagine: John Suffolk, our Group-wide Global Cyber Security Officer, and his people check individual parts and components before they are even released for installation in our systems. And anything that doesn't stand up to this strict control will no longer be developed further. Incidentally, John Suffolk previously worked for the English government, ultimately as Her Majesty's Government CIO, i.e. as Chief Information Officer, and also as Chief Information Security Officer.

**What does transparency mean for Huawei?**

We have to put everything on the table. You can imagine that a single instance of us being shown to be improperly handling data and our promises would be catastrophic, if not fatal, for us. We are probably the only technology partner who even submits our source code to our customers for review. In our Huawei Cyber Security Transparency centre in Brussels, our customers can check the source code of the programs, the operating system or applications that are in the network components from Huawei themselves. In addition, we clearly show how we comply with the certifications and standards that should apply to such systems. This transparency is exceptional. We depend on our customers being able to trust our software.

**And use such efforts to cement confidence in Huawei?**

Absolutely. We work closely with European industry associations - for example in the development of safety standards - and also allow ourselves to be checked and evaluated by independent safety and testing institutes. Which other technology group in our area allows external auditors to examine the processes? Our customers trust Huawei, and they say publicly that they believe the security concerns about our technology are unfounded.

**Okay, technology is one thing, but what about protecting the data on Huawei components?**

Firstly, we implement the standards of the European General Data Protection Regulation throughout the group. Secondly, it is important to know that as suppliers of the hardware for 5G networks, we know nothing about data traffic. The operators of the networks have full control over it. Huawei has no access: only the operator of the network decides how data is treated in the network.

**But can you guarantee that Switzerland can guarantee self-determined handling and the security of its communication networks with Huawei components?**

Self-determination is in the hands of our customers. We never take this away from them in any way. Security in cyberspace is a complex and multifaceted topic. No one can guarantee 100 percent security at all times. Anyone who does this is simply not honest. But what we at Huawei can guarantee is that our customers constantly and thoroughly test our systems, that they can test and externally audit us. Because cybersecurity is always in flux.

**What is certain today may no longer be so tomorrow.**

That is why we in the company are constantly striving to follow the latest developments and to constantly adapt the safety components with our research and development. Because nobody should lose their digital independence because of the systems we sell to our customers. Digital self-determination must be fought for and secured anew every day. We

are an excellent partner for this because we cannot afford anything other than transparency and openness towards our customers. Every other competitor does not have to pass as high standards and critical reviews as we do. We don't have anything against that either, just that we're being denied credibility for purely political reasons without being checked and without having really looked behind the scenes. That is also unfair to our almost 200,000 employees. Because our company is owned by them, 99.16 percent. Our founder Ren Zhengfei still owns 0.84 percent of the shares.

**Distrust of Huawei is fuelled primarily by the United States. Do you think that's fair, and doesn't it also involve a technology war?**

Above all, we want to sell our products and not a way of life or a political world view. And because we are simply business-oriented, we believe that our transparency and openness should actually decide. This is also our motivation to let ourselves be illuminated. Many of our employees say they have never worked in a company that is audited so often. This also applies to the security area - not only in relation to software or components, but also to the supply chains and the personnel.

**How is Huawei accepted in Switzerland?**

You have to ask our customers that. From our point of view, we are the reliable and leading technology partner for the telco infrastructure in this country. With our technological experience and reliability, we are part of Swiss society and make a transparent contribution to the benefit of the country and its economy. This is important to us. As an innovative incubator, we also want to initiate agile partnerships in research and thus support the digital transformation in Switzerland. We meet all Swiss security requirements and are willing to have this checked transparently by independent institutions. We are probably much more Swiss than many want to admit.