

SAMENA TRENDS

EXCLUSIVELY FOR SAMENA TELECOMMUNICATIONS COUNCIL'S MEMBERS

BUILDING DIGITAL ECONOMIES

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THE RISE OF BROADBAND ECONOMY

Osman Sultan
Chief Executive Officer
du



EDITORIAL

The trend in the rise and expansion of digitization is causing telecommunications operators to transmute as a result and enhance their product portfolios with broad range of digital services. Various telecom operators, becoming more conscious of their vision of transforming into smarter players, are focusing on digitization while collaborating with other industry players not only to stabilize their traditional revenue streams but also to generate new ones.

When we speak of broadband and its role in economic development, we think of futuristic national broadband networks with greater efficiency and impact on the overall "Digitization" wave. I believe that the increasing deployment of broadband access technologies and its proliferation to masses will expedite economic progress, for it has already been evidenced in different parts of the world.

I strongly agree on the said mechanisms that will help incentivize broadband investments. Today, broadband is increasingly being used for services like mHealth, mBanking, mLearning, and mPayments, among others. All these trends have been the driving force behind the need for national broadband networks so as to aid into the process of economic development. I believe, subsidies in shape of Capex support are essential for helping the proliferation of broadband particularly to the areas where the infrastructure is limited and the cost of deployment is not economically viable due to the weakness of consumer purchasing power and limited or zero infrastructure, among other factors.

It is also important that an inter-market multi stakeholder dialogue be initiated for the purpose of finding out ways on how best the broadband investments can be incentivized so that greater broadband proliferation may be realized through direct government-supported machinery that will lead to economic development.

The regional ICT industry is on the verge of a digital explosion, and SAMENA Council with high-level discussions on regulations and policies, innovations and strategies, between industry and government experts is corroborating the need for a win-win market whereby all the industry stakeholders are benefitted. SAMENA Council while continuing its journey to provide industry stakeholders in the region to share thoughts on industry issues is organizing "The Telecom Leaders' Summit 2014" on June 19th. Prime focus of discussions will cover investment friendly policy frameworks for Broadband development, digital governance, emergence of mobile services and content distribution challenges. I'm quite optimistic that different sessions which include Mobile data growth and spectrum needs, Convergence of Telecom, Media and OTTs Regulating for the future, and Broadband Investment at "The Telecom Leaders' Summit 2014" will provide resolutions that consequently will have all-encompassing paybacks in the long run.

Yours truly,

Bocar A. BA
Chief Executive Officer
SAMENA Telecommunications Council

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EDITORIAL



INDUSTRY LEADER'S VISION



Osman Sultan
Chief Executive Officer
du

Osman Sultan has been appointed CEO of Emirates Integrated Telecommunications Company, du, starting 1st of January 2006, after spending eight years at the helm of the Egyptian Company for Mobile Services (MobiNil), a company he helped set up in 1998 to bid for and operate a GSM licence in Egypt.

As Chairman of the Arab Working Group for the Private Sector in the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), he is no stranger to the UAE, having addressed several conferences here on telecommunications issues.

His vast experience includes managing operations in several countries in Europe, North America and the Middle East.

Mr Sultan joined the France Telecom Group in 1983 and for the next 11 years worked in management positions in sales, marketing and customer services activities in one of France Telecom's subsidiaries that specialised in electronic information services.

In 1994 he was actively involved in the acquisition of a US based operations and was appointed Vice President for Worldwide marketing & sales for the new company. In this capacity he was in charge of the merger of two companies in the USA and Europe. He also managed operations in Paris, Washington, London, Frankfurt and Sydney and the set up

of a large distribution network in more than 20 countries in Europe, South America, the Middle East, Asia and Japan.

In 1995, he was appointed President of a US based subsidiary, Questel.Orbit Inc., with a goal of developing a growing business of professional Online Services.

In 1996 Mr Sultan received the award for The Best Web Site-Legal Product from the American Information Association and later received the Man of the Year award from the Professional Electronic Information Services Community in France.

In 1997, Osman Sultan joined France Telecom Mobiles International (FTMI) as Vice President for Business Development in charge of the Middle East and the Arab World.

That same year he was in charge of putting together the MobiNil consortium bid for a GSM license in Egypt. The consortium succeeded in acquiring 68% of Egyptian Company for Mobile Services.

Osman Sultan holds a Degree in Engineering and has addressed several conferences on Telecommunications and Electronic Information Services, Mobile Telecom and the Internet in the Middle East (Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia, UAE), Japan, the USA and Europe



Q. Please share some of your initiatives taken to aid into the adoption of connected society?

A. The continuous evolution of technology is driving us towards the inevitability of a connected, digital society. In the UAE this is being strongly promoted under the visionary leadership of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, through the Smart Government and Smart City initiatives. du is aiming to proactively support the vision for a Smart future. More connectivity will lead to the development of a knowledge-based economy, while driving sustainability and building upon profitability through the growth of contributions to GDP. IT and Telecom infrastructure will deliver intelligent services, which will lead to a happier and more convenient life. A Smart City will mean having access to everything at your fingertips, being connected to everything that matters. Smart City will empower and facilitate a better healthcare, banking, security and education systems.

As a telecommunications company we are uniquely positioned as an enabler of Smart initiatives, and we have participated in, as well as taken the lead on several discussions to determine how we can best support both the move to a hyper-connected UAE community. One of our core contributions to this connectivity evolution is our continued

investment in next generation LTE and fibre networks, to offer the best experience to our customers, while we add value through innovative products that make data more accessible. Wifi UAE, our ambitious digital connectivity programme will offer WiFi access across UAE's public spaces, to deliver a seamless experience that everyone can enjoy.

du is also providing a leadership role in offering innovative digital services to fulfill the needs of a connected society. From award winning digital health service, Wellness app, to digital transport enablement via our NFC-enabled ticketing service for Dubai Metro, du continues to bring novel offerings to the UAE market.

Q. How policy makers, regulators and industry players can collaborate to build a sustainable model in the world of governance?

A. Collaboration is not an option; it is a need. All stakeholders must work together in order to achieve sustainability. The role of each stakeholder is crystal clear: the policy-makers lay down the vision, regulators devise the framework and the industry players collaborate to make it happen.

Q. How OTTPs are affecting on the operators' revenues, should the SAMENA region embrace the changes and legislation adopted in Europe?

A. du sees OTTP's as partners in enabling a connected digital society and continues to explore mutually beneficial business models with its OTTP partners. This is a realisation that must happen across the ecosystem including telcos and OTTPs, as we can work hand in hand to benefit all.

The SAMENA region consistently showcases regulatory leadership that is suitable and relevant to the regional market. Learning from every region's success is important, but addressing local realities is the primary driver for regulatory success.

Q. Since digital content market is exploding; how are you planning towards supporting such big data?

A. The advent of smartphones and smart devices has pushed data usage to ever-growing levels. Just a few years back, it was unfathomable that in one Internet minute there would be 1.3 MN video views, about 30 hours of video uploads or for that matter 1 MN tweets. In 2015, it will take us 5 years to view all the videos crossing the network in 1 second! So what is happening? In other words, people are increasingly leading digital lives and spending time online. There is an eternal realization among people that connectivity and communication is no longer an option, it is our right and central to our existence. Interactions, events and changes are taking place at a rate never witnessed before. Every minute the digital world is being fed with new content, data, opinions and emotions.

du has adopted a proactive approach to not only manage but to benefit from the rapid growth in the digital content market. Our 3 pronged approach covers distribution (connectivity), storage (data centres) and curation (discovery and customisation) of massive amount of digital content for our customers and enterprises.

This generation of huge amounts of Big Data, also enables telcos, to transform their networks into Smart networks. Big Data will allow us to improve customer experience by serving them better, and it also opens up new revenue streams.

Q. How operators can embark on the need for localized content in the SAMENA region? What transformation it can create for you as telecom operator?

A. Locally relevant content is at the heart of driving a digitally connected society. However, the creation of localised content poses somewhat of a dilemma for telcos; traditionally, we are the enablers of access to content, not the developers of content. It will require a change in

mindset, with clear thinking and strategy being vital, but, if successful, this will be a coming of age for telcos.

du believes that enhancing the availability of local content will go a long way in letting the consumers fully benefit from the next generation digital connectivity provided by telecom players. We are best placed to harness this opportunity, and we should. Developing relationships with the app and developer community would be the start, and this is where we have an advantage because we already deal with the content aggregators, VAS players and so on.

Q. With the advancement of the digital content industry and ever-rising usage of mobile apps, do you agree that digitization would stimulate the adoption of new regulation?

A. Digital services for multiple industries like commerce, health, education, retail and advertising help break adoption barriers for consumers.

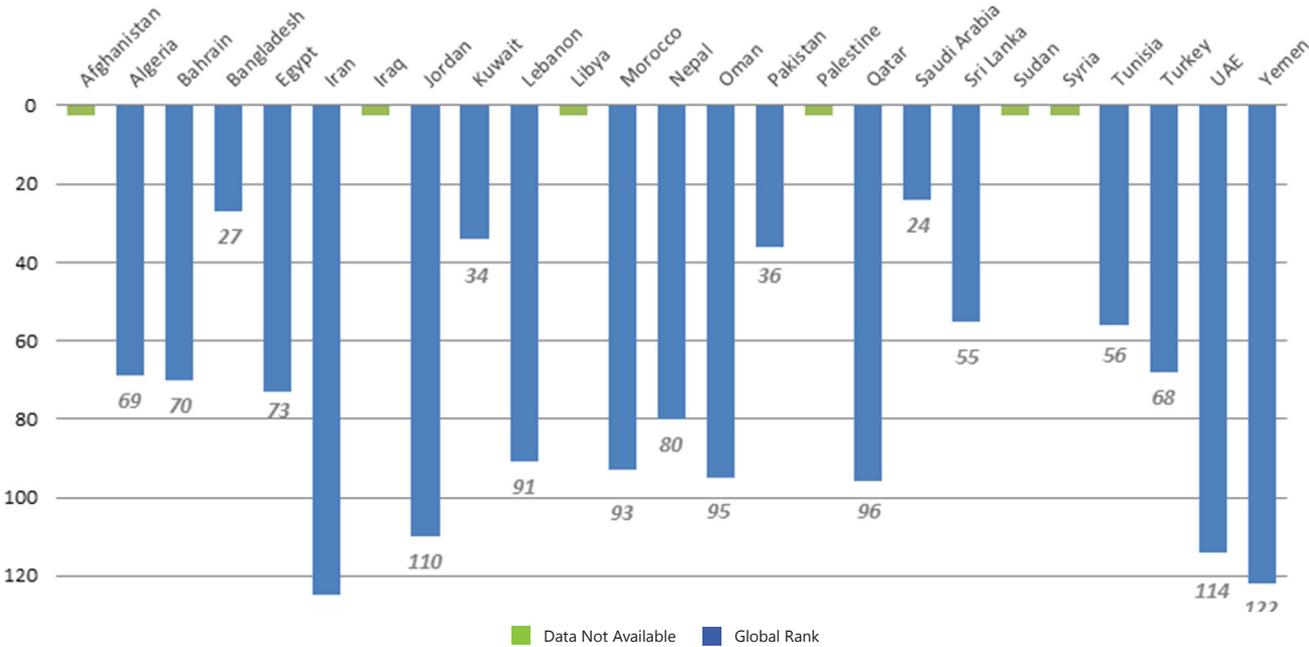
Telecom players like du play a central role in this digital enablement. du welcomes regulatory and policy support that helps telecom players to offer such cross-industry digital innovation.





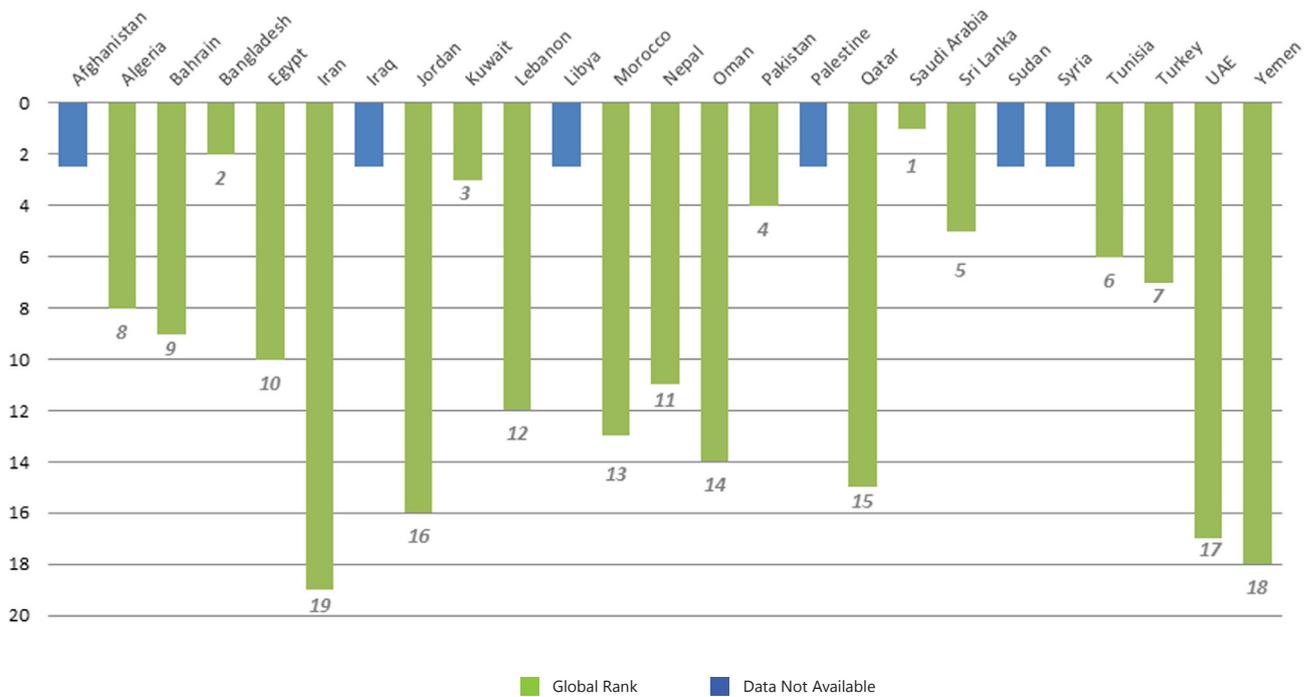
REGIONAL PERFORMANCE

Strength of Investor Protection (Global Rank of SAMENA Countries)



Total countries: 148
 Rank 1 - Globally: New Zealand
 Data Source: World Economic Forum – Global Competitiveness Report 2013
 Image Source: SAMENA Council

Strength of Investor Protection (Regional Rank of SAMENA Countries)



Total countries: 25
 Rank 1 – SAMENA Region: South Asia
Data Source: World Economic Forum – Global Competitiveness Report 2013
Image Source: SAMENA Council

Research Note: Ranking done by SAMENA Council based on data from The World Economic Forum. Within the SAMENA region, Saudi Arabia is at number 1 in terms of "Strength of Investor Protection" resulting in an investment and investor friendly market. Bangladesh is at 2nd position while Pakistan at 4th and Sri Lanka at 5th position in the region. Thus, 3 out of top 5 countries within the SAMENA region are from the South Asia and 2 are from the Middle East. Tunisia, Algeria and Egypt are among the top 10 countries in the SAMEAN region and are at number 6, 8 and 10 respectively.



HOSTED BY



THE TELECOM LEADERS' SUMMIT 2014

19th June 2014

The Armani Hotel, Burj Khalifa, Dubai, UAE

THE RISE OF THE BROADBAND ECONOMY

SHAPING EXCELLENCE IN COOPERATION:
... GOVERNMENT, OPERATORS, INTERNET PLAYERS..."

Huawei Host at SAMENA Leaders Summit

Q. What are the major CAPEX and OPEX challenges for telcos? How can a balance be created to boost smart broadband infrastructure development?

A. Both fixed and mobile broadband penetrations rates are on the upswing with bandwidth demands also rising quickly. The challenge on CAPEX in particular is the return on investment. The traffic growth as a result of new services—particularly social apps and content services—does not always equate to revenue growth for operators. The challenge on OPEX relates to growing network complexity. This brings higher maintenance costs to operators particularly for mobile broadband with multi-layer, multi-RAT networks, and on fixed networks with multiple access technology and last mile maintenance.

We help operators to overcome these challenges by using converged technologies that fall within Huawei's Single strategy. On the CAPEX side, this convergence gives operators the chance to reduce deployment costs and improve per bit value through Huawei's Value Growth Solution (VGS).

In terms of OPEX, Huawei has an innovative SingleOSS solution to converge different OSS platforms and hence reduce maintenance cost. We also believe SON (self-

organizing networks) technology deployments on mobile networks can be used to reduce human intervention and greatly improve network performance and maintenance efficiency.

Q. What major trending technologies are you providing to bridge the digital divide?

A. As part of Huawei's global sustainability strategy, bridging the digital divide is one of our company's four strategic initiatives and a priority for us both in the SAMENA region and beyond. Today we work to provide people across all geographic areas with ease-of-access to communications services and enable broadband inclusion for all. In high altitude areas of Nepal, for example, Huawei has helped local carrier to deploy integrated base stations in rural areas with an emphasis on energy-efficient outdoor base stations that efficiently power mobile communications within mountainous areas. With its ultra-high downlink bandwidth and industry chain maturity, Huawei's TD-LTE solution has also effectively in places like Africa to improve the penetration of broadband access while reducing the cost of wireless broadband access.

When looking at technologies that can help make these visions a reality, Huawei again supports operators under a Single strategy.

Q. As a member of the Broadband Commission for Digital Development of the UN, how is Huawei leveraging its technological strengths to lead global broadband development trends?

A. Huawei actively contributes to the formulation of broadband standards around the world. We have joined more than 170 industry standards and open source organizations globally, working with groups such as the ITU, 3GPP, Open Group, and others with a commitment to innovation. As a member of the Broadband Commission for Digital Development of the UN, we leverage our technological strengths to lead global broadband development, promote the formulation of related policies, and proactively participate in broadband construction in different regions.

In an effort to better understand customer needs and market demands, Huawei annually invests an average of 10% of its revenue into research & development activities. This can be seen in the launch of leading technologies but also in the establishment of global research and competence centers as well as joint innovation centers created together with operators around the world. With an understanding of our customers' requirements, we are already a leader in global broadband development, a leader in commercial LTE deployments worldwide, and have also worked on more than 20 announced national broadband projects worldwide with a market share of over 70%.

Q. Please highlight some of your success stories from the SAMENA region, which directly or indirectly helped in the process of adoption of digitization and broadband proliferation?

A. Huawei provides a broad range of tailored products, solutions and consulting services in SAMENA with all three of Huawei's main business groups—Carrier, Enterprise and Consumer—active in the region. It is one of the fastest growing regions for Huawei around the world as we offer a unique "Cloud-Pipe-Device" strategy to innovate across the ICT value chain.

On the telecom carrier front, over the last 15 years Huawei has partnered with leading operators with notable industry firsts. In the Middle East region—which is my own personal remit—we have managed 45 accumulated networks since 2005 and maintain three Huawei resource centers dedicated to Managed Services, three training centers across the region, and several Joint Innovation Centers with local operators. Together with our partners we have launched the first 3G network in the Arab world, the first HSPA+ network in the region, as well as the first 4G mobile broadband networks in the Middle East. Last year in particular we also opened our first Middle East logistics hub as well as our first Middle East IT Competence Center, which together help our partners to proliferate broadband while also acting as excellence hubs for innovation on the global level.

Moving forward, we will continue to stay on the forefront of innovation in areas such as LTE-Advanced, voice over LTE, telecom IT outsourcing, enterprise IT solutions, and the planning of Smart City initiatives across the SAMENA region.

Q. Is Huawei supporting the proliferation of smart handsets?

A. We absolutely are. Mobile broadband has created great opportunities for personal smart devices, and Huawei's Consumer Business is central to our strategy of proving end-to-end solutions across the ICT industry. Leveraging our heritage in the telecoms space and coupled with our global research & development capabilities, today our Consumer Business is deepening its portfolio with market-leading smartphones alongside a well-established range of tablets, mobile broadband devices and home devices. Huawei has already launched a series of world firsts in the SAMENA region and is leading on the LTE front with a host of smartphones, tablets, and WiFi devices that are LTE compatible.

Q. How effective is the role of the SAMENA Council Leaders' Summit in providing an open platform of discussion and knowledge sharing across different stakeholders?

A. Huawei exists to serve customers whose demands are the driving forces behind our innovation. After all, business success is the ultimate measure of the value of any technology, solution or service improvement, and hence the need for being proactive in anticipating the industry's future requirements. Driven by these customer needs, we believe it is of the utmost importance to encourage industry collaboration through regular, open dialogue like that provided by the SAMENA Council Leaders' Summit. The role of the SAMENA Council Leaders' Summit is thus very effective and important for the industry as a whole.



Mr. Pan En
Vice President of Solution Sales
& Marketing Middle East
Huawei Technologies Co., Ltd.





MEMBERS NEWS

Orange continues to support innovation in Africa and launches its third incubator partnership on the continent

After the CTIC incubator in Senegal and the Ebène project in Mauritius, Orange (<http://www.orange.com>) announces the opening of the first start-up incubator in Niger. Orange Niger and its local partners* have helped to set-up CIPMEN, a small- and medium-sized business (SME) incubator designed to encourage the creation of new and innovative companies in the country. In sub-Saharan Africa, 85% of SMEs fail within the first two years, but 80% of companies that undergo an incubation process are still operating after five years. Orange is keen to support new ideas that result in progress for all, in particular those that create economic value at a local level. This is why Orange supports partnership initiatives that help to speed up these positive changes. Orange has already contributed to the creation and support of the CTIC incubator in Dakar and the Ebène project in Mauritius, in addition to the organization of Hackathons in Tunisia, Uganda and Mauritius. These projects embody both Orange's innovation strategy and the responsible approach it takes when addressing people's needs in the fields of education, healthcare and farming, as well as financial and administrative services.

Ooredoo builds 100 towers as launch looms closer

Mobile operator Ooredoo has built about 100 cell towers with hundreds more in the pipeline ahead of its expected launch in the third quarter 2014, according to CEO Ross Cormack.

The Qatar-based telco expects to have about 30 percent population coverage at launch, particularly in Yangon, Mandalay and Nay Pyi Taw but also other areas, he said during a press update in Yangon on May 25. Ooredoo has inked deals with two independent tower companies, Pan Asia Towers and Myanmar Tower Company, to build towers.

The firm has also built some 1200 kilometers of backhaul fibre, with several hundred more kilometers due by the end of the year, he said. It has data centers in Yangon and Mandalay, and expects its data center in Nay Pyi Taw to be complete in the next two to three week. Ooredoo has already completed an interconnect test call with Telenor, and is in negotiations with incumbent operator (MPT) about interconnecting. Ooredoo has inked deals with two independent tower companies, Pan Asia Towers and Myanmar Tower Company, to build towers.

Sheikha Wafa Hasher Al Maktoum recognizes Hala Badri's commitment to corporate responsibility

Under the kind patronage of HE Sheikha Wafa Hasher Al Maktoum, Hospitality Management Holdings (HMH) bestowed the HMH Award for Excellence on Hala Badri, Executive Vice President, Brand and Communications, du. The Award recognizes Badri's commitment to corporate responsibility and her contributions to initiatives in the UAE. The Award was presented by Laurent A. Voivenel, CEO, Hospitality Management Holdings, during a ceremony held at [location]. He stated that Badri is an 'ideal role model', by 'playing a remarkable role in taking the lead to support meaningful development programs and sustainable initiatives that have had an enormous impact on the well-being of our community.'

"It is an honor to receive this Award, and I am truly grateful to HE Sheikha Wafa Hasher Al Maktoum and Hospitality Management Holdings," said Badri. "Corporate responsibility is at the core of our company, in line with our corporate mission to 'add life to life'."

Batelco in deal with HGC

Batelco has signed a "one-stop-shop" agreement with Hutchison Global Communications (HGC) which will allow both parties to extend their reach through accessing the network of the other.

Batelco's enterprise division general manager Adel Daylami and HGC international and carrier business president Andrew Kwok signed the agreement in the presence of officials from both organizations on the sidelines of International Telecoms Week (ITW) which was held in Chicago, US. HGC is the fixed-line division of Hutchison Telecommunications Hong Kong Holdings, an integrated telecommunications operator. With the agreement in place, Batelco can utilize HGC's extensive international network to deliver a comprehensive range of connectivity services including IPLC, MPLS and other services to customers in Hong Kong, Asia Pacific and other countries and regions covered by HGC's network. Similarly, HGC can utilize Batelco's presence across the Middle East region and Europe to reach its customers.

PCCW Global and Etisalat Group sign group framework agreement for voice interconnection

PCCW Global, the international operating division of HKT, Hong Kong's premier telecommunications service provider, and Etisalat Group, a leading telecom operator with operations in 19 countries across Asia, the Middle East and Africa, have signed a group framework agreement (GFA) for voice interconnection. The voice interconnection will access PCCW Global's international IPX network capability which provides guaranteed end-to-end delivery of voice and mobile data services to more than 50 destinations over a private and managed IP network, carried by one of the world's largest private IP backbones. Etisalat Group operations will have direct access to PCCW Global routes into these countries around the world. This is via an extensive transmission network that combines MPLS, IPL,

terrestrial and satellite links as well as PCCW Global's 50-plus IPX interconnections. These operations will benefit from a unique solution that features end-to-end compression and remote regional switching dedicated to keeping regional traffic within the region.

Etisalat announces new local call saving bundles starting as low as AED 1 per day

Etisalat, UAE's leading telecom operator, announced the launch of daily local calling bundles, offering Wasel prepaid customers the opportunity to make local calls at heavily discounted rates.

The daily bundles come in three flavors to address the needs of both low and high usage customers: AED 1 for 5 minutes; AED 2 for 10 minutes, and AED 4 for 30 minutes. The minutes can be used to call any mobile or landline number in the UAE. Wasel prepaid line users can choose and subscribe to their preferred bundle for free by dialing *111#. Customers need to subscribe only once, and their preferred bundles will be renewed daily upon making the first local call of the day. There will be no charges on days subscribers do not make local calls, which is convenient for customers especially while travelling abroad on business or vacation.

Local calls made on Wasel prepaid lines beyond the bundled talk time will be charged at 0.6 fils per second starting 1 July 2014. The rate for customers on old tariffs will be 36 fils per minute starting from July first 2014. Customers on old tariffs can migrate to New Wasel and enjoy per second billing by dialling *140# for free.

Ooredoo customer base exceeds 3 million

Ooredoo has reached the "historic milestone" of more than 3mn customers in Qatar - the highest number ever recorded by the company.

The total customer base includes mobile, fixed line, broadband, entertainment and business solution customers, and the company has seen a surge in growth across all areas in 2014, driven by Ooredoo's expanding portfolio of services and the on-going dynamism of Qatar's economy.

Mobile service growth has been particularly strong, with Ooredoo now supporting more than 2.5mn mobile customers in Qatar. Ooredoo has successfully grown its base of post-paid customers over the past year, as Shahry has emerged as the fastest-growing mobile service in Qatar.

First Arabic content at UAE-IX

UAE-IX, the first carrier- and data center-neutral Internet exchange for the Middle East, warmly welcomes Selevision: This new customer marks another milestone in the history of UAE-IX.

UAE-IX started in the Middle East to facilitate keeping local traffic local. Meanwhile, UAE-IX reaches up to 60 percent of the eyeballs in the GCC region, and traffic is growing at the exchange. With Selevision, the first Arabic content is now coming to UAE-IX. Selevision is the first On-Demand

service provider within the MENA region. They provide the latest movies from major Hollywood studios as well as Bollywood's best studios, in addition to Arabic content. In partnership with studios such as Paramount, Warner Bros., Sony, Columbia, Disney, Fox, Rotana, MBC – and many more yet to come – their customers enjoy entertainment at a click-away: "A click-away from getting what you want WHEN you want...".

For more information, please visit www.selevision.net. UAE-IX warmly welcomes Selevision and looks forward to more Arabic content at UAE-IX.

Huawei showcases importance of digital oilfield technology and Unified Communication Infrastructure

In partnership with GASCO and Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC), Huawei—a leading global ICT solutions provider—hosted a first of its kind conference for the UAE's oil & gas industry, previewing how a new generation of smarter information & communication technologies are set to streamline efficiencies, reduce security risks and minimize overhead costs in the energy sector. The conference took place at the Sheikh Khalifa Energy Complex in Abu Dhabi yesterday.

Huawei has a strong belief that energy companies can greatly improve their processes through new technologies, specifically the adoption of digital oilfield and intelligent pipeline solutions. Investment in this level of ICT allows oil companies to better manage and visualize data plus establish a communications infrastructure that links their upstream, midstream and downstream activities together.

STC Group joins Bridge Alliance

Saudi Telecom Company (STC) announced that it has joined Bridge Alliance, the Asia-Pacific region's largest partnership of mobile operators, as the only member from the Middle East. Membership in the Bridge Alliance will help leverage collaboration in enterprise mobility services and in the fast growing area of M2M. By joining Bridge Alliance, STC aims to strengthen its services in the GCC and Asia-Pacific, to better serve its Multinational Business Customers at worldwide level and to enlarge its M2M Solutions portfolio.

Bridge Alliance aggregates and standardizes member operators' services, solutions and knowledge, and through its promotion of unified services, supports the seamless deployment of M2M and mobile business across borders. Through its membership in Bridge Alliance, together with partner operators and other alliances, STC will be able to provide comprehensive support for M2M services including telemetry, remote monitoring and security to its enterprise customers for the GCC region as well as globally.

Mobily Maintains ISO27001 in Information Security System for the Ninth Year

Mobily managed successfully to maintain (ISO27001) certification for Information Security Management System that was obtained by the company in 2006 from British

Standards Institution in the Information Security Operations Management Center (SOC), Network Operations Center (NOC) and data centers.

Mobily Data centers have passed all the adopted requirements and procedures which are performed by specialists who conduct necessary rigorous testing that are made every three years and known as the annual audit and the principal audit.

Dr. Eyas Al Hajery, Chief Business Support Officer, said that the data centers, Information Security Operations Management Center (SOC), and Network Operations Center (NOC) in their continuation to maintain the (ISO27001) certification, confirms the company's keenness to keep the privacy and security continuity for all processes that are managed within the scope of the center.

PTCL attains the status of authorized ACA training employer

Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited (PTCL) has been granted 'Training Employer' status by the Institute of Chartered Accountants England & Wales (ICAEW) after meeting their strict screening and evaluation criteria.

PTCL is one of few companies in Pakistan to be granted this prestigious status by ICAEW, which ranks as one of the esteemed and highly recognized Institute of Chartered Accountants in the world. PTCL Internal Audit department in collaboration with HR took the initiative of PTCL's registration as Approved Training Employer with ICAEW and now PTCL is one of the very few commercial organizations in the country who have been granted this prestigious status.

This recognition further strengthens the company's commitment to train Pakistani youth for international qualification. PTCL is also running one of the largest capacity building programs in the country by offering 500 young graduates to work with the company under PTCL internship programme.

Etisalat's 7th Annual Group HR Forum: HR professionals from 15 markets gather to share best-practices and industry trends

Etisalat Group, the leading telecoms operator in the Middle East, Africa and Asia, recently held its seventh annual Group HR forum in Abu Dhabi. This forum brings together more than 75 professionals from 15 markets to reinforce its HR strategy, values and foundations across its operations. Over the course of two days, participants shared best-practices and discussed the latest trends in the HR industry, while mapping Etisalat Group's HR vision for the next five years within the broader industry framework.

Etisalat Group's commitment to industry-leading Human Capital systems and practices was recognized as Etisalat UAE received the Group HR Excellence Award in a special ceremony alongside the forum. The award highlighted the UAE's focus on employee engagement, culture development, HR technology, talent development and innovation. Etihad Etisalat (Mobily) is another successful affiliate of Etisalat

Group operating in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has also received the MENA HR Certificate of Excellence at the 6th annual MENA HR Excellence Awards Ceremony that was held in Dubai. This award highlighted Mobily's focus on innovation in recruitment, an improved work environment, and employee motivation and development through training and incentives. Etisalat Misr in Egypt has also won a Bronze level award in the 2013 Human Resources Category Stevie® Award Winners and was named the Human Resources Department of the Year.

du honored by Minister of Education during Emirates Educational Excellence Awards

His Excellency Humaid Mohammad Al Qutami, Minister of Education, honored du during a ceremony at the Emirates Educational Excellence Awards. The honor, received on behalf of du by Osman Sultan, Chief Executive Officer accompanied by Fahad Al Hassawi, Chief Commercial Officer, recognized the company's support of the Emirates Educational Excellence Awards.

Al Hassawi said: "We thank the Ministry of Education for this honor and to all those behind the scenes – be it individual efforts or educational institutions, whose efforts have contributed to the growth of the sector. This is an important partnership for us, as it is in line with our responsibility towards building a sustainable community through the next generation of Emirati leaders. In partnering with the Ministry of Education, we are able to contribute to promoting standards and quality throughout the UAE's educational sector."

The Emirates Educational Excellence Awards was held at the Grand Hyatt Dubai, attended by VIPs and dignitaries from several government entities, as well as professionals from the education field.

TRA and Huawei join forces in Broader Way Forum to support UAE government transformation to digital society

With digital connectivity proving a key driver of national development worldwide, Huawei—a leading global ICT solutions provider—in association with the UAE Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) welcomed senior-level stakeholders from the UAE's public sector as well as top analysts, telecom industry leaders, and consultancy firms to examine how national broadband initiatives will transform the region's socio-economic landscape in the years ahead.

Convening at the UAE's first Huawei Broader Way Forum, the full-day conference focused on the emergence of national broadband networks which have been embraced by governments around the world—including several initial projects in the Middle East—as a tool for driving economic competitiveness by providing universal high-speed communication services to the public.

During the forum, a series of dedicated panel sessions were held to investigate the role of national broadband networks in driving countries' transformation to a digital society. The role of broadband infrastructure in terms of GDP growth, job creation, and development of national services such as healthcare and education were amongst the key applications highlighted.

Tunisiana becomes Ooredoo, as global brand roll-out continues

Ooredoo announced that its Tunisian operations have fully adopted the global Ooredoo brand, as the company continues to make strong progress on launching the brand across the MENA region and South East Asia.

Ooredoo's Tunisian operations join colleagues in Qatar, Algeria, the Maldives, and Myanmar in deploying the Ooredoo brand, following the global brand launch in February 2013. Tunisiana was Tunisia's first privately-owned telecommunications company, launching in 2002, and successfully introduced the Ooredoo brand in Tunisia in July 2013. To mark the occasion, a special brand inauguration ceremony was held in Tunis, attended by senior Ooredoo officials, representatives from the public and private sectors, and the media.

Speaking at the event, Dr. Nasser Marafih, Group CEO, Ooredoo, said: "Today is a key moment in the history of Tunisia's communications sector. Adopting the new brand will enable Ooredoo to better leverage our global resources to promote human growth in Tunisia. Technology can unlock young people's potential, enabling them to become entrepreneurs and leaders, and enable women to better support their families and pursue their ambitions. Ooredoo will work with our customers every step of the way to help them reach their goals."

Omantel Wi-Fi now available at City Center Malls

Omantel, the leading provider of integrated telecommunication services in Oman, announced that both Muscat City Center and Qurum City Center are now covered by Omantel's Wi-Fi network. The new service will enable visitors to enjoy the very high quality internet service provided by Omantel. Wi-Fi service is part of Omantel's broadest choice of broadband service that is offered through the widest broadband network in the Sultanate with superior quality.

Ahmed Ali al Ojaily, Manager Connectivity Solutions at Omantel Corporate Unit said: 'Omantel always seeks to provide its customers with the best communication services that meet their different needs. Providing them with instant and easy access to the internet is one of the top priorities of the company. We are very pleased to announce the joining of Muscat and Qurum City Centre to the list of sites covered by our Wi-Fi service. The new added value service will make customers' visit to the mall more enjoyable and convenient'. "The Wi-Fi service is one of the main services provided by Omantel to its corporate customers. The service provides a safe instant access to the internet at very high speeds. Businesses in Oman now seek to provide Wi-Fi as a value added service to their customers', he added.

Mobily provides Princess Nora University with high-speed Internet services

Mobily signed a memorandum of understanding with Princess Nora bint Abdulrahman University under which the company is to provide high-speed internet services for the University, in a move aimed at building a knowledgeable society, and to provide educational facilities by Smart Communications solutions.

The MoU was signed by Engineer Abdulaziz Al Saghyir, Chairman of Mobily's Board and Dr. Huda Al-Ameel Director of the university at the Headquarters of the University in Riyadh, in attendance of Dr. Marwan Al Ahmadi Mobily Chief Business Officer.

To ensure the continuity of the service, Mobily will provide the university with the internet service as per the latest technologies along with alternative plans to keep the university always in permanent connection with the high speed internet network, as such service represents high priority to the university to implement many educational operations and projects.

Etisalat upgrades hosting portfolio

Etisalat, the UAE's leading telecom provider, has upgraded its hosting services as part of its commitment towards offering better value to customers.

Etisalat is the leading provider of web hosting, co-location and cloud services in the region via its digital services arm. The telecom major currently offers 16,000 sq meters of floor space, with plans to increase capacity by 5000 m2 to accommodate the growing needs of its customers. Etisalat currently operates two certified "Tier III" data centers with five more planned to undergo "Tier III" certification later this year. The Uptime Institute's Tier Classification System provides a consistent method to compare facilities based on expected site infrastructure performance, or uptime.

Etisalat is launching new colocation packages inclusive of space, power, internet bandwidth and onsite storage in all its locations across the UAE. The new packages have been specifically tailored and priced to the needs of customers and will soon offer online monitoring and self service capabilities at no extra charge.

Go for gold with new Nawras Join and Win promotion

Nawras is giving new and existing Mousbak and Shahry customers the chance to win 1 kilogram of gold with their new 'Join and Win' promotion. Customers signing up to and ShahryPack or to Mousbak (Sawalif, International, Weekly 2 or any of the 1GB and above monthly data plans), during the next 60 days, will be eligible to enter the monthly prize draws and the grand prize draw to win gold.

Customers will receive a token each time they join or renew one of the bundles, as well as every time they recharge using 5 or 10 Omani Rial vouchers. The more tokens that are accumulated, the more entries customers will have for

the monthly draws and the grand prize draw. Mousbak customers can check and track their token balance by dialing *111*100# and Shahry customers can use *141*142#.

Two monthly draws will take place at the Nawras Campus in Muscat Grand Mall and the names of winners will be announced on the Nawras' website and social media channels. The grand prize draw will take place at the end of the promotion and the winner will be contacted directly by Nawras to receive their 1 kg of gold.

Etisalat signed a €3.15 billion facilities agreement with seventeen banks

Etisalat, the leading telecommunications operator in the Middle East, announced the signing of a multi-currency club deal of EUR 3.15 billion with a group of seventeen international, regional and local banks. The purpose of the financing is to fund the acquisition of the Vivendi's 53% stake in Maroc Telecom.

Financing consists of two facilities which can be utilized in EUR and/or USD. Tranche A is a twelve months bridge loan amounting to EUR 2.1 billion at a price of EURIBOR plus 45 basis points for the first six months increasing by 15 basis points in each of the following three months. Tranche B is a three-year bullet term loan amounting to €1.05 billion at a price of EURIBOR plus 87 basis point.

Utilization of funds under the two facilities will take place at the closing of the transaction with Vivendi.

PTCL and Dailymotion join hands

Pakistan Telecommunications Company Limited (PTCL), the largest ICT services provider in Pakistan, has heralded a new age of video digital services in the country by bringing Dailymotion to Pakistan. The joint venture will offer improved viewing experience to PTCL customers, coupled with a wide-range of entertainment content and multi-screen viewing options.

Dailymotion - one of the largest video and user generated content platform - consumes a significant portion of the broadband traffic in Pakistan and with this partnership PTCL has paved the way for the legitimacy of Pakistani content on Dailymotion portal.

Walid Irshaid, President and CEO PTCL said at the occasion, "PTCL is spearheading the spread of digital services culture in Pakistan and this move will augment the growth of local content industry and talent as well as open-up new opportunities and better monetization for Pakistan's content industry".

"This partnership will also add a new dimension to our digital services platforms and will enable PTCL to offer wide range of entertainment products to our customers and reach audiences from diverse demographics", added Walid Irshaid.

PTCL recognized amongst most preferred employers

Pakistan Telecommunications Company Limited (PTCL) has been recognized among the top 3 most preferred employers in the telecom sector as per the 'Top Employer Ranking 2013'. The prestigious award identifies the company as one of Pakistan's best places to work.

This ranking is based on the survey conducted by ROZEE.PK, which is Pakistan's leading on-line recruitment platform, in collaboration with YouGov, a UK-based global research firm. 'Top Employer Ranking' is the result of a comprehensive assessment, which included 760 employers and covered feedback from 15, 000 professionals working at different tiers as well as students from diverse backgrounds.

"PTCL has a strong history of nurturing talent and creating opportunities for the professionals of the country and this achievement is derived from the culture of innovation, professionalism and excellence that makes PTCL a good choice as an employer in the industry", said Syed Mazhar Hussain CHRO PTCL.

HH Sheikh Maktoum Bin Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum visits du's stand at Careers UAE

His Highness Sheikh Maktoum Bin Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Deputy Ruler of Dubai, visited du's stand at Careers UAE, accompanied by a delegation of VIPs and dignitaries. Jamal Lootah, Senior Director National Recruitment & Development, du, received the dignitaries at the stand.

du is seeking Emirati talent to fill the 50 career opportunities it will create in 2014 for UAE nationals, in line with the UAE leadership's vision of Emiratisation. The company is also dedicated to training and developing Emirati talents, through initiatives such as its Masar program. Masar is open to Emirati students between 18-23 years, who are currently in their third year of university studies. Students can obtain further details from their university's career center. As part of Masar, students successfully accepted onto the programme receive a monthly stipend for the last 24 months of their studies, after which they join du as a Masar Graduate Trainee.

Etisalat launches lowest call rates to any mobile in UAE

Etisalat, the UAE's leading telecommunication services provider, has launched two new bundles offering as low as 20 fils per minute calls from Etisalat home telephone to any mobile network in UAE at the lowest rate in the UAE. This is available to all eLife customers and standalone home telephone customers.

Etisalat is offering bundles of 200 minutes for AED 49 and 500 minutes for AED 99. Rashed Al Abbar, VP Home Products, Etisalat UAE, said: "Etisalat is committed to providing the highest level of service and we continuously strive to give our customers attractive offers that meet their needs. These bundles are the lowest in the UAE and ensure customers enjoy call time as well as peace of mind. Etisalat has been

leading the market in offering value for money across all products. For home customers, Etisalat has introduced super offer for international calls, where customer can take advantage of 1 fils per second calls to 162 countries such as the Philippines, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, the UK, the US, Canada, Egypt, Jordan, Oman, France and Russia.

Nawras extends international off-peak call times

Nawras is offering customers an extra two hours of international off-peak call time to stay connected with friends and family overseas. Under the new plan, international off-peak timing will now begin at 6pm every evening and continue until 6am the next morning from Saturday to Thursday and all day on Fridays, giving customers more opportunity to enjoy great value from their Nawras service.

Marwa Al Farsi, Nawras Proposition Manager, International Segment – Consumer Marketing, said, "The additional two hours each day allows customers to stay in touch with friends and family for longer and helps to overcome the difficulties of time differences between Oman and other countries around the world. Nawras customers can also enjoy low calling rates to over 200 countries, making it even easier to share special moments with their loved ones."

Apple CEO visits Etisalat

In his first trip in the region, Mr. Tim Cook, CEO of Apple, made a historic stop to the UAE and held a meeting with Mr. Ahmad Julfar, CEO of Etisalat Group, to discuss how the presence of Apple can be elevated in the region and how the two companies can strengthen their relationship across Etisalat's footprint in the Middle East, Africa and Asia where Etisalat operates in 15 countries including Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Egypt and Nigeria. This high level meeting took place in the presence of Mr. Saleh Al Abdooli, CEO of Etisalat UAE and Mr. Khalid Al Kaf, CEO of Mobily. Mr. Julfar welcomed Mr. Cook and praised the excellent relationship that Etisalat has had with Apple, a relationship dating back 4 years ago, when the two companies signed a strategic agreement on devices to cover the UAE and Saudi Arabia.

PCCW Global to provide technology and telecommunications services for Modderfontein Zendai

PCCW Global, the Hong Kong-headquartered international operating division of HKT, Hong Kong's premier telecommunications service provider, has signed a strategic collaboration agreement with Shanghai Zendai, an urban complex developer specializing in commercial real estate from mainland China, to provide technology and telecommunications services, skills and experience to assist in Zendai's development of a smart city in Modderfontein, Johannesburg, South Africa.

The development at Modderfontein covers an area of approximately 1,600 hectares*. According to the current planning, the Modderfontein area will be built into a new city center in Johannesburg, including nine functional zones, namely the central business district, international

conference and exhibition center, entertainment center, silver industry and retirement community, international residential community, comprehensive education district, sports center, trade and logistic park, and light industry park. The project will house around 30,000 families and create about 200,000 fixed jobs for the local community, which will help enhancing the social development and economic prosperity of South Africa.

PCCW Global, as the venture's strategic technology partner, will provide Zendai with a wide range of services including systems development and solutions integration, application development and management, telecommunications and information technology services, cloud computing services and e-commerce solutions.

Mobily signs an exclusive agreement with VASCO

Etiad Etisalat, Mobily, signed an exclusive strategic agreement with VASCO, a Global company with presence across 5 continents, in which Mobily provides connectivity to all Kingdom's visitors in 33 countries.

The agreement was signed in the presence of Prince Faisal Bin Abdullah Al Faisal, VASCO Board Member, and Khalid AL Kaf, Mobily's CEO with a number of leaders of both sides at Mobily's headquarters in Riyadh.

This agreement provides visa applicants Mobily SIM card during the visa process within a bundle designed to enable travelers to communicate at competitive prices.

Prince Faisal said "this partnership is a part of our strategy to enhance customer experience and make positive impact by providing added value services to our clients. This cooperation with Mobily will be critical in provision of high efficiency Telecom services and products". He added that this service would be available in 33 countries.

VASCO, is a global company that renders multiple value added services ranging from Telecom, Insurance, Retail, Banking, Financial Services and Healthcare to 24 million visa applicants worldwide in more than 100 countries

Omantel Home Broadband, preferred choice for home broadband users in the Sultanate

Omantel, the leading provider of integrated telecommunication services in Oman, has taken a number of steps to improve the home broadband service that is provided through ADSL and FTTH technologies. Among these steps were the recent speed upgrade that benefitted more than 90% of the customers, simplifying the procedures for applying for the service as well as enabling customers to change their packages electronically through the Company's website.

The demand on fixed broadband service has recently witnessed a considerable growth with the number of subscribers crossing 100,000. Omantel Home Broadband service enjoys the highest share in the market with more than 60% of the total number of home broadband customers.

Omantel is the pioneer provider of leading edge telecommunications services in the Sultanate of Oman connecting individuals, enterprises and government across the country through a state-of-the-art network.

Omantel launches Ozone package plan for of Hayyak youth subscribers

In line with the Company's continuous efforts to enhance the communication needs of its valued customers, Omantel announced the launch of "Ozone" plan which is specially designed for the youth. This innovative service offers Hayyak youth customers a variety of services and offers as well as discounted calling rates to all the Ozone customers, free mobile broadband usage, free ring tone from Sama'ni and much more benefits from selected Ozone authorized partners. Commenting on the launch of the new plan, Saleh Mahmoud Al Maimani, Manager Core Services at Omantel Consumer Business Unit said: "We understand the needs of our customers. Every individual has his own style. We believe that the Ozone plan is the perfect match for the needs of our youth."

PTCL signs MoU with WWF to reduce carbon footprint

Pakistan Telecommunications Company Limited (PTCL) has signed an agreement with World Wildlife Fund (WWF) - the leading wildlife conservation organization - for implementation of 'Green Office Program' at its corporate head office.

The program is aimed towards reducing resource consumption, subsequent costs and carbon footprint of the company that would eventually help in environmental conservation. The agreement will enable PTCL to monitor and reduce its carbon footprint in collaboration with WWF and work towards developing green organizational practices. Once the criterion is fulfilled, PTCL will be certified as a "Green Office".

Speaking at the occasion, Syed Mazhar Hussain, CHRO PTCL, said "Environment and energy crisis are the key issues our country is facing at the moment, and it is the responsibility of every individual and organization to take necessary measures in their respective domains for conserving the environment"

Browse Facebook at no cost with STC

STC allowed its customers browsing Facebook "at no cost" by visiting the official Facebook website, Facebook Mobile website or by using Facebook application on Apple and Android platforms.

All STC customers can automatically use the offer that covers both postpaid and prepaid SIMs starting from Tuesday April 15, 2014 and lasts for a month

This step by STC of allowing customers browse Facebook "freely" was a result of the great success it has achieved round the world. Furthermore, it is the most visited website in the kingdom beside the huge infrastructure of STC that enabled it achieve strong and comprehensive coverage.



REGIONAL NEWS

UAE to complete Mobile Wallet project in 2015

Between now and end-2015, the UAE is expected to become the first country in the world that will have a fully integrated digital payment platform supported by all banks operating in the country.

The UAE Banks Federation (UBF) has formally launched the implementation of its Mobile Wallet project that was announced in February this year. The Mobile Wallet is the financial component of the Smart Government initiative. "The Mobile Wallet supports a critical national goal. The UAE will be potentially the first country in the world where the whole banking sector supports such a programme, which will impact everyone's daily lives in one way or another," said Abdul Aziz Al Ghurair, Chairman of the UAE Banks Federation.

The project also incorporates the facility for smart phones and other digital devices to be used for cashless purchasing in UAE retail and other outlets, as well as a means to store and transfer money.

Morocco: Inwi launches outdoor Wi-Fi in Casablanca

Moroccan network operator Inwi (Wana) has launched an outdoor Wi-Fi service in Casablanca, the largest city in Morocco. According to a press release posted on the operator's website, the company trialed the technology

in El Jadida in July 2013, after telecoms watchdog the National Agency of Telecommunications Regulation (ANRT) recommended an expansion of Wana's wireless broadband coverage, thus making the services accessible to more of the population. The free 'Wifi7dak' service, which offers average download speeds of 3Mbps, is said to be complementary to 3G and traditional Wi-Fi networks, and covers a large urban area, including the arrondissements of Derb Ghallef and Maarif and the Mohammed V and United Nations squares. The operator aims to offer the service in 22 cities by the second half of 2015.

Qatar 'still offers growth potential in telecoms due to strong outlook'

Qatar, which has a high 170% mobile penetration ratio, still offers growth potential due to strong outlook on its economy and population expansion; while the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) is all expected to be a 100 million mobile subscriber market by 2020, according to a study.

Highlighting that mobile subscribers grew strongly by 3.5% quarter-to-quarter in the fourth quarter of 2013 to 3.81mn, Global Investment House said despite the high penetration rate of around 170%, "we believe the potential for growth still remains due to forecasted economic and population growth." Population growth is expected to exceed average GCC growth due to foreign work-force requirement, it said.

Pakistan: Rs 12 billion to be invested on telecenters, promotion of ICT

Around Rs. 12 billion would be invested in next three years to establish 500 telecenters and promotion of Information & Communication Technologies (ICT).

Universal Services Fund (USF) would fund a mega programme for setting-up of e-telecenters for which adequate provisions has been made in the budget. The telecenters would help improve public access to ICT services such as NADRA facilities, biometric verification devices for issuance of SIMs, e-facilitation in health, agriculture, commerce, governance and learning to generate local employment and entrepreneurial opportunities.

They said the improved connectivity of remote areas program; the USF would also invest another Rs 2.8 billion where upon optic fiber cable was being aggressively laid to provide connectivity to outlying areas particularly in Balochistan, Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), rural Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and other parts of country. Additionally, the sources said Rs. 3.6 billion have been earmarked out of USF to be spent on Rural Telecommunications Program.

Saudi Arabia prepares to embrace smart, social and mobile government

In 2013, ICT spending in Saudi Arabia grew by 12%. A market liberalization and shifting demographics led to mobile phone penetration rates reaching 170% (63% smartphones), and approximately 60% of the total population became Internet users. The popularity of social networking was at an all-time high, receiving the largest ever number of subscriptions in a calendar year.

The Saudi Arabian government has now prioritized the use of ICT to enable citizens, businesses and government agencies to benefit from e-government. Several ministries and municipalities have enhanced their online portals and launched dedicated mobile applications. Many government agencies were integrated by using the e-Government Program Yesser Infrastructure. These infrastructures include: Government Service Bus (GSB), Government Service Networks (GSN), and the most recently established center, the National Contact Center, 'Amer', which is dedicated to supporting citizens and businesses regarding e-services, via various channels such as telephone, e-mail, website, SMS, FAX, and social networks.

As part of the 2nd National e-Government Action Plan, several innovative initiatives are being implemented, and many others are in the pipeline.

DDED, Dubai Courts launch joint Smart Government project

The Dubai Department of Economic Development (DDED) and Dubai Courts have jointly launched a project to transform all public dealings to an online format.

Under the terms of the project, a new App will be developed from which users can download or fill in any form of the

two institutions online. The project is part of the Dubai Smart Government initiative launched by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai. "The new project will be launched from May 15," said Sami Al Qemzi, Director General of DDED. "It will transform the way business license and registration processing is done in Dubai for the benefit of businesses. Ease and speed of business is underlying philosophy of this project," said Sami Al Qemzi, Director General of DDED.

"Till now entrepreneurs and investors had to fill in forms and come to the DDED or Dubai Courts to submit their forms and applications. What we will do now is eliminate the need for people to take the trouble of applying in person or through authorised representative. Entrepreneurs and investors can now go online and do all the paperwork from the comfort of their home or office," said Tarish Al Mansoori, Director of Dubai Courts.

Sri Lanka among top 10 broadband countries

Sri Lanka has been rated among the top 10 broadband countries in terms of growth in 2013 by Broadband Forum, a leading non-profit telecom industry consortium dedicated to developing broadband network specifications.

Members of the Broadband Forum include telecommunications networking and service provider companies (non-mobile), broadband device and equipment vendors, consultants and independent testing labs (ITLs).

Sri Lanka Telecom (SLT) recently announced that it has launched the country's first fiber-to-the home (FTTH) broadband services covering major markets, greatly enhancing the broadband footprint in Sri Lanka. According to the year-end worldwide statistics published by Broadband Forum, 40 million new broadband subscribers were added in 2013, taking total broadband lines to 678.6 million.

Algerian government acquires 51% stake in Djezzy

The Algerian government has acquired a 51% stake in domestic mobile giant Orascom Telecom Algeria (OTA), which operates under the Djezzy GSM brand, for a total consideration of US\$2.643 billion. Under the agreement, Djezzy's parent company Vimpelcom Ltd of Russia will sell portion of its 96.81% stake in the cellco, held via its Egypt-based subsidiary Global Telecom Holding (GTH, previously OTH), to Fonds National d'Investissement (FNI). Following the transaction, which is expected to be finalized by end-2014, Vimpelcom's shareholding in OTA will decrease to 46%; Cevalat, which owns 3% of the operator, however has agreed to sell its share to Vimpelcom for USD178 million, bringing the Russian-backed company's holding to 49% of Djezzy GSM. The total dividends and proceeds due to GTH at the closing of the deal are expected to amount to USD4.0 billion. Vimpelcom/GTH will retain management control of the Algerian cellco, and will continue to consolidate the operator's results under International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS).

Azerbaijan, Pakistan eye co-op in ICT sphere

Azerbaijani Minister of Communications and High Technologies Ali Abbasov has met Pakistani Ambassador to the country Khalid Usman Qaiser.

Abbasov highlighted relations between the two countries, as well as development of cooperation in the fields of information and communication technologies. The minister said there was wide potential for developing relations in the high technologies sphere. Qaiser, in turn, expressed his country's keenness to develop cooperation with Azerbaijan, stressing the importance of establishment of new relations, as well as training the specialists.

The diplomat said he would spare no efforts to contribute to developing the Azerbaijan-Pakistan ties during his diplomatic tenure. The minister expressed confidence that the activity of the ambassador would contribute to further expanding relations between the two countries.

Telecom Egypt to start mobile phone service in June

Telecom Egypt CEO Mohamed al-Nawawi said the company has LE5 billion in cash and does not need to borrow from banks to pay the fees of the mobile license that it has recently obtained.

"The service starts in June," he said, explaining that the company is interested in broadband and not frequency services.

He added that Telecom Egypt offers services worth LE4 billion to mobile phone companies. "This makes us a key partner," he said. "We give them infrastructure for LE1 billion and retail services worth LE30 billion."

He also said the company is competing in the retail sector.

Government-owned Telecom Egypt recently acquired the license to expand into the mobile phone market. It is not the fourth mobile phone company, competing with Etisalat, Vodafone and Mobinil.

Morocco: Meditel covers 100 % of Marrakesh with 3G

Moroccan operator Medi Telecom (Meditel), an affiliate of French telecoms giant Orange Group, has revealed that the footprint of its 3G network has been extended to cover 100% of Marrakesh, the fourth largest city in the country. Local newspaper *L'économiste* reports that the company has upgraded a total of 138 base transceiver stations (BTS) in the city, with a further 34 planned for upgrade in 2014; Meditel is currently replacing telecoms equipment in Rabat and Casablanca. The overhaul forms part of Meditel's equipment renewal programme, which was launched in 2013. Further, the company expects that once the upgrade is completed (by 2015), its 3G coverage will reach 99% of the country.

Zong to invest US\$1 billion to roll out 3G, 4G services in Pakistan

Chinese-owned mobile phone operator Zong will invest US\$1 billion in the development of its infrastructure to roll out 3G/4G services in Pakistan. Zong had got the license of 10 MHz of 3G spectrum and 10 MHz of 4G spectrum in next-generation cell phone spectrum auction recently.

Sikandar Naqi, Adviser to the Zong CEO, on Thursday said that the company will complete the process of rolling out 3G services for consumers in major cities by October this year. He ruled out the possibility of the forthwith commercialization of 4G services for consumers, saying before that the company needs to intensify network capability and establish infrastructure. The expert said having 10MHz spectrum for 3G and 4G licenses, Zong holds an upper-hand over its fellow mobile carriers and it will be able to offer cheaper services to its customers. Naqi said that providing quality services at cheaper rates has always been the priority of Zong and the policy will be preserved for next-generation services.

Vodafone Egypt selects OpenCloud for future service innovation

Telecom service-layer innovator OpenCloud has been chosen by Vodafone Egypt to provide its Rhino service-layer to enable delivery of new services. The deal, which follows a successful proof-of-concept phase, makes Vodafone Egypt the eighth member of the Vodafone group to select OpenCloud's products.

"OpenCloud is experiencing increasing demand for its products as leading operators look for more competitive next-generation solutions to turbo-charge their service-layer" said Jeff Gordon, CEO of OpenCloud. "We believe that the openness of our Rhino products, and the flexibility, choice and control provided, are what these more competitive operators are looking for to enable cost-effective innovation."



REGULATORY & POLICY NEWS

CITC extends deadline for MVNO license applications to 7 July; VMMEA secures USD15m funding

Saudi Arabia's telecoms watchdog the Communications and IT Commission (CITC) has extended the deadline for applications for the country's third mobile virtual network operator (MVNO) license to 7 July 2014. According to a press release, the decision was taken after unnamed 'interested parties' requested an extension to the previous deadline. As previously reported by TeleGeography's CommsUpdate, in April 2014 the CITC announced that it would re-tender the third MVNO license, after revoking the authorisation provisionally granted to Dubai-based retailer Axiom Telecom. Axiom CEO Faisal al-Bannai revealed that his firm had been unable to submit all of the necessary documentation, prompting the cancellation. The development was a setback for Axiom's domestic host provider Zain Saudi Arabia, with the operator forced to watch as the country's two approved MVNOs prepared to launch on its rivals' platforms. Zain Saudi CEO Hassan Kabbani argued: 'All three MVNOs should start at the same time when all will be ready', although the regulator has argued that the launch of services by Virgin Mobile and Jawraa Group (Lebara) remains an independent issue.

Meanwhile, in a related development, MVNO group Virgin Mobile Middle East & Africa (VMMEA) has announced that it concluded a USD15 million senior secured facility with the Bank of London and the Middle East (BLME), in order to fund its operations in Oman, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia and South Africa.

The TRA to announce The National Plan for UAE Smart Government Goals

The Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA), in collaboration with the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) is working to announce The National Plan for UAE Smart Government Goals.

In May 2013, H. H. Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, launched the mGovernment Initiative with the aim of providing government services to the public round-the-clock through mobile phones and smart devices. The National Plan for UAE Smart Government Goals takes the UAE mGovernment Initiative to the next level as it lays down detailed measures for the UAE's mTransformation and to mobilize the stakeholders in the public and private sectors to provide services through mobile phones and smart devices by engaging intelligent service-delivery methods such as mobile applications that are based on predictive analytics.

While, the UAE mGovernment Roadmap details plans until May 2015, the National Plan goes beyond that. The TRA is currently in the process of holding meetings with the various stakeholders to provide an overview to the Plan, assess the level of their technological infrastructure, discuss the measures to achieve mTransformation and agree on mutual cooperation to execute a feasible roadmap of initiatives that capitalizes on latest trends and best practices.

TRA developing national broadband plan

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of the UAE is developing the national broadband plan as part of UAE's Vision 2021, which aims to place it among the world's leading countries. The broadband plan will accelerate the deployment and adoption of broadband and hence encourage innovation in services within the UAE.

"TRA recognizes the importance of broadband to encourage investment in innovation, which is also recognized worldwide as per the International Telecommunication Union, which has stated that broadband is the way of promoting innovation, economic development, social benefits; for telecommunication companies as well as the ability to reach a worldwide audience," said Saif Bin Ghelaita, director technologies and standards, technology development affairs department at TRA.

He was speaking at the Huawei Broader Way Forum, where top telecom leaders, analysts and consultants gathered and discussed how national broadband can drive socio-economic development and transform the region's socio-economic landscape in the years ahead. He said the UAE has witnessed a 30 per cent growth in broadband subscriptions between January 2011 and November 2013, and has 1.05 million internet subscribers.

FCC proposes sharing 150MHz of federal spectrum with wireless broadband

The FCC released a proposal to make 150MHz of mostly federally held spectrum in the 3.5GHz band available to share between the government, "priority access licensees," and other "general authorized access users." This move would boost spectrum for small cells deployed by cellular carriers and fixed wireless broadband services.

The FCC is calling the spectrum-sharing plan the "Citizens Broadband Radio Service."

The proposal is the result of an advisory put out by the Obama administration way back in July 2012, which recommended that 1000MHz of federal spectrum be opened to alleviate some of the pressures in the industry relating to the scarcity of spectrum. Today's proposal deals specifically with spectrum between 3550MHz and 3650MHz, and it seeks comment on adding another 50MHz on top of that, expanding the band to 3700MHz.

In the program, a wider band of spectrum would be shared by multiple licensees rather than divvying spectrum up into smaller and smaller bands that sit dead in areas where they're unused. "Because the federal use in this band occurs primarily around the coasts, it is a great opportunity for intensive wireless broadband use on a shared basis," wrote the FCC in a blog post.

Oman's TRA expediting process to set up telecom towers in remote areas

The Telecommunications Regulatory Authority's (TRA) project to set up 200 telecom towers in rural areas is gaining momentum. The project, which will serve 250 villages and an estimated 15,000 people, was launched in the third

quarter of 2012 in response to appeals by citizens living in remote areas.

The project was expected to be completed by the end of 2013. Eng Mohamed al Maimani, manager of universal services obligation, TRA explained, "Things are progressing. As many as 24 stations are already operational; six additional stations are expected to be operational by this month-end, and 70 by the end of 2014. TRA is working on ways to streamline the process which includes land acquisition from the Ministry of Housing, in addition to authorizations from the Ministry of Environmental and Climatic Affairs (MECA) and the Ministry of Regional Municipalities and Water Resources."

He added, "TRA has an agreement with MECA, which gives us the authority to approve a site if the criteria set by it are met. Also, representatives from the concerned branches of government cooperate by attending site inspections together, which speeds up the process.

China simplifies telecom VAS approval in Shanghai FTZ

The review and approval process for foreign-funded enterprises to operate telecom value-added service (VAS) businesses in the Shanghai Free Trade Zone (FTZ) has been simplified, a Chinese ministry announced on Tuesday.

The review and approval authority has been delegated from the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology to the Shanghai Communications Administration, the ministry said in a policy document.

The length of time from submission of application to approval has been shortened to no more than 60 days from five months, the document said.

The Shanghai FTZ, established in September, has undergone a string of key reform measures including easing cross-border use of RMB, liberalizing interest rates on foreign currency loans, facilitating offshore financing and outbound investment.

Kenya shakes up mobile money by licensing three MVNOs

The Communications Commission of Kenya has licensed three new MVNOs – Mobile Pay, Finserve Africa and Zioncell Kenya – with the potential to disrupt the country's mobile money market, currently dominated by Safaricom's M-Pesa. The newcomers can offer customer registration, SIM cards issuance, billing and customer care. They will also be assigned their own numbering range. All will be hosted on the network of Airtel, the country's second-largest network behind Safaricom. Mobile Pay is backed by Tangaza Pesa, which already offers a mobile money transfer service. But delivering the service using its own SIM card will improve the firm's margins. "While we continue with mobile money services as our core business, our customers will also access voice, data, and SMS services," Oscar Ikinu (pictured), founder and chief executive of Tangaza Pesa, told the media. Although he would not reveal its pricing, Ikinu said voice, data and SMS would be offered below current rates because they are a valued-added service that Mobile Pay can use to lure new customers.



A SNAPSHOT OF REGULATORY ACTIVITIES IN SAMENA REGION

Afghanistan

Board Chairman: Mr. Abdul Wakil Shergul

[Afghanistan Telecommunication Regulatory Authority (ATRA)]

Afghanistan should have 4G phone services in the country shortly, according to statements by the ICT Ministry. Officials at the Ministry told the local news agency that around 90 percent of the Afghans are currently having access to mobile phone services while 50 percent have access to internet. The country's ICT Minister, Amirzai Sangin said that the government's revenue from telecommunication has amounted to US\$1.3 billion during the past ten years. Sangin further added that around 140,000 people have been employed in telecommunication sector across the country. (May 20, 2014) cellular-news.com

Afghanistan's first communications satellite has gone into operation. Afghansat 1 will support TV broadcast services, mobile backhaul, IP communications, and international connectivity for the next seven years. "After that we will have another satellite named Afghansat 2 instead," said Amirzai Sangin, minister of communications and information technology, in a statement over the weekend. Operated by Eutelsat, Afghansat 1, a Ku-band satellite, was originally launched in 2008 under the name Hot Bird 9. agreement to rent the satellite, changing its official name to Afghansat 1. According to local press reports, the Afghan government is paying Eutelsat \$4 million a year to use Afghansat 1, but it expects it to generate annual revenues of \$15 million. "This satellite really is [a] great and unprecedented achievement,"

said Afghanistan's vice president Yunus Qanuni. (May 12, 2014) totaltele.com

Telecom Operators Aim for Universal Access, Value-Added Services and Data Revolution,' is a new market research publication announced by Reportstack. The report offers a precise, incisive profile of Afghanistan's mobile and fixed telecommunications markets based on comprehensive proprietary data and insights from our research in the Afghan market. This report provides detailed analysis of the near-term opportunities, competitive dynamics and evolution of demand by service type and technology/platform across the fixed telephony, broadband and mobile sectors, in addition to a review of key regulatory trends and the main opportunities. The key findings are: The mobile services market in Afghanistan generated US\$0.921bn in revenue during 2013, and mobile penetration reached 65% of the population at year-end.; Voice services - fixed and mobile - will remain the dominant source of revenue, accounting for an estimated 80% of the market total in 2018; Since 2012, five telecom providers have been granted 3G licenses. Mobile data, encompassing VAS and mobile broadband, is set to be a standout segment in Afghanistan, and expects it to spur revenue growth in telecom services and to generate 19% of total mobile revenue in 2018; In its ICT development plan adopted in 2012, ATRA, the regulating body, committed to achieving universal and affordable network access for all citizens. Telecom providers will have enough room to grow their revenues without cutting into

one another's market shares. This will be accomplished by increasing network coverage and service provisioning to underserved populations and by ushering in Afghanistan's data revolution (May 9, 2014) [whatech.com](#)

Algeria

Chairperson: Mr. Toufik Bessai

[Regulatory Authority for Post & Telecommunication (ARPT)]

The Algerian Stock Exchange (Bourse d'Algerie or SGBV), has announced that domestic cellco Orascom Telecom Algeria (OTA), which operates under the Djezzy GSM brand, will be listed on the stock market in the near future. The majority stake (51%) in the operator was acquired by state-owned Fonds National d'Investissement (FNI) in April 2014, after a lengthy negotiation process between the government and Djezzy's parent company Global Telecom Holding (GTH, itself owned by Vimpelcom of Russia). The Algerian government acquired a 51% stake in Djezzy GSM for a total consideration of USD2.643 billion. Following the transaction, which is expected to be finalized by end-2014, Vimpelcom's shareholding in OTA will decrease to 46%; Cevital, which owns 3% of the operator, however has agreed to sell its share to Vimpelcom for US\$178 million, bringing the Russian-backed company's holding to 49% of Djezzy GSM. Vimpelcom/GTH will retain management control of the Algerian cellco, and will continue to consolidate the operator's results under International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS). (May 2, 2014) [telegeography.com](#)

Bahrain

Chairman: Dr. Mohammed Al Amer

[Telecommunication Regulatory Authority (TRA)]

The Bahrain Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) recently conducted an extensive exercise to update its list of licensees. The telecom watchdog had noticed that a number of licensees had their CR status with the Ministry of Industry and Commerce to be revoked or have not been renewed. "In terms of the telecommunications law, a valid CR status is an essential pre-requisite not just for the attainment of a telecom license but also for the maintaining of that license. As a consequence the authority has commenced the process to revoke such licenses," remarked TRA's acting director of technical and operations Mohammed Alnoaimi. "The authority is keen on reviewing its regulations and framework based on a number of principles, including the protection of consumers and promotion of competition as it continuously following up and reviewing the licenses granted aiming at efficiently regulating the telecommunications market and improving and developing its position to foster social and economic growth and ensure that consumers' aspirations and expectations within this environment are met," he stated. According to TRA, a number of licensees were also not active in the market. "A telecommunications license is not a commodity but a privilege which in turn grants rights and imposes obligations. It is important to ensure that an entity does not hold on to that privilege without exercising it," Alnoaimi stated. In view of this, entities falling within this category will also be the subject of license revocation procedures. The Authority would be continuing this exercise on a periodic manner to make sure that the list of licensees is current and valid, he added. (May 25, 2014) [TradeArabia News Service](#)

Zain has increased its stake in its Bahrain subsidiary after buying a 6.25 percent stake from Vodafone. Zain said that it paid US\$12.5 million for the stake, which lifted its holding

to 63 percent, and will enable it to retain control of the company following an imminent stock market listing. Zain is required to list 15% of the company on the local stock market as a condition of its license, but as it owned 56.3% of the company, faces a loss of management control. Zain Bahrain's other shareholders now include chairman Sheikh Ahmed bin Ali Abdulla al-Khalifa, with a 16.3 percent stake and a government pension fund which owns 4.7%. Bahrain's second mobile license was awarded to Zain in April 2003 and the network launched that December -- ending Batelco's monopoly. The company had planned to launch an IPO in 2008, only for the share sale to be abandoned.

(May 7, 2014) [cellular-news.com](#)

Bangladesh

Chairman: Sunil Kanti Bose

[Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC)]

The Executive Committee of National Economic Council (ECNEC) has approved a plan by Bangladesh Telecommunications Company Ltd (BTCL) to roll out a countrywide LTE-based wireless broadband network costing BDT9.56 billion (US\$121.3 million), to provide low-cost broadband services in all seven divisions including rural areas by 2017. Telecom Secretary, who is also the chairman of BTCL, said the LTE network -- aimed at data-only (computer) users -- will be developed in areas where other operators are reluctant to roll out services, and added that the company's proposal for a new spectrum allocation of 35MHz in the 2500MHz band had already been sent to the regulator. 64% of the LTE project funding is to come from the Export-Import Bank of Korea (under a 25-year loan) and the remainder from the Bangladeshi government. A total of 670 base transceiver stations (BTS) and 300km of fiber-optic cable are earmarked for the deployment.

(May 22, 2014) [The Daily Star](#)

Bangladesh ended April with 37.17 million internet subscribers, compared with 36.86 million at the end of the previous month. The mobile internet base reached 35.64 million, up from 35.33 million in March, according to figures from the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC). The number of fixed-line internet users totaled 1.23 million, almost flat compared with the previous month, while the number of WiMAX subscribers amounted to 296,204 by end-March, compared with 301,730 at end-March. (May 15, 2014) [telecompaper.com](#)

Egypt

Executive President: Eng. Hesham El Alaily

[National Telecommunication Regulatory Authority (NTRA)]

Egypt's Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT) has denied newspaper reports the country's cabinet has withdrawn the unified license file from the ministry. The unified license has been a source of controversy in Egypt, which in March Vodafone said it could consider international arbitration should the Egyptian government approve legislation under which fixed line incumbent Telecom Egypt (TE) will gain access to the country's mobile networks. In response to reports the Egyptian cabinet had withdrawn the unified license file from the MCIT, the ministry said it had in fact been given a full mandate to take charge of the file. "The mandate comprised a decision from the prime minister to form a committee presided by the ICT Minister, other ministries' representatives and expert members to look into best mechanisms to establish a national entity for the development of the

infrastructure considered the main backbone for the ICT sector," the MCIT said. (May 30, 2014) humanipo.com

Following the revelation last month that Telecom Egypt (TE) would be required to hand over EGP2.5 billion (US\$360 million) for a unified telecoms license allowing it to enter the wireless market under its own steam, its board of directors have now agreed to pay the fee. The firm confirmed in a statement that it would move forward with the license acquisition, stating: 'The firm's board of directors agreed in its emergency meeting on May 4 to obtain the mobile phone license without frequencies in return for EGP2.5 billion'. (May 6, 2014) Reuters

Iraq

CEO: Dr. Burhan Shawi

[Communication & Media Commission (CMC)]

The Iraqi government approved the allocation of 3G licenses to the country's mobile operators. The cabinet's general secretariat made a short announcement on its Website without providing details as to how and when the mobile operators will receive licenses, nor giving any indication as to their cost. "The General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers announced the approval of granting mobile phone companies operating in Iraq the right to use the third generation frequencies," the statement read. The government has given the go-ahead so that the frequencies can be used for high-quality 3G services, it added. Iraq has been waiting for 3G for a number of years. In February the country appeared to be making progress when a former Communications and Media Commission (CMC) official told that the Council of Ministers had set a reserve price of US\$307 million for 3G licenses. The CMC had previously lobbied against the idea of an auction, requesting instead that the licenses simply be allocated to the country's existing operators, but the government reportedly refused that request. It now seems to have backtracked, although the lack of detail in announcement means it is as yet impossible to say for certain how the licenses will be awarded. The key factor for the telcos will doubtless be the price. There has been a lot of opposition to that US\$307 million base price, which many claim is too high and could impact on the operators' ability to roll out 3G networks. (May 6, 2014) totaltele.com

Iran

Minister of Communication & Information Technology: Mr. Mahmoud Vaezi

[Communication regulatory Commission (CRC)]

Iran plans to launch three home-made monitoring satellites into orbit in the next Iranian calendar year (March 2015-March 2016), a senior Iranian aerospace official announced. "Zafar (Triumph), Tolou (Sunrise) and AUT Sat will be sent into space onboard the Simorq satellite carrier," Deputy Head of Iran Space Agency (ISA) Hamid Fazeli said. He noted that the satellites will transmit images of the Earth's surface to ground stations. Zafar will be sent into a geostationary orbit, which is a circular orbit around 36,000 kilometers (22,320 miles) above the Earth's equator. The satellite will reportedly have a lifespan of one year and six months, and will capture images and transmit them to stations on earth. Tolou satellite will also carry out remote sensing and topography missions, and will travel in an orbit of 500 kilometers above from the Earth's equator. Moreover, AUT Sat, developed by Iranian scientists at Amir Kabir University of Technology, is a monitoring and telecommunications satellite, which weighs 100 kilograms. It is expected to have a lifespan of two

years. Earlier this month, Fazeli said Tehran was preparing to orbit three satellites of Tadbir (prudence), Sharifsat and Fajr into orbit soon. "These three satellites have been ready for launch since last year and they are now only waiting for the Iranian Defense Ministry to send them into space," Fazeli told reporters on the sidelines of the International Workshop on Management of Space Programs in Tehran. He said these three satellites are Tadbir (Prudence), SharifSat and Fajr. He noted that Sharif University has designed SharifSat, Tadbir (Prudence) is a joint product of the Space Research Center and the University of Science and Technology and Fajr has been designed and built by SaIran electronic and Communication Company. The International Workshop on Management of Space Programs opened in Tehran. In December 2013, Fazeli said that Tehran planned to orbit two new home-made satellites in the near future. "Tests are being conducted on the two satellites of Sharif and Tadbir before the launching process," he added. Early in September, Presidential Advisor and the ISA Chief Akbar Torkan said that the first satellite to be launched in the new government is called Tadbir." Omid (hope) was Iran's first research satellite that was designed for gathering information and testing equipment. After orbiting for three months, Omid successfully completed its mission without any problem. It completed more than 700 orbits over seven weeks and reentered the Earth's atmosphere on April 25, 2009. (May 29, 2014) english.farsnews.com

Jordan

Chairman of the Board of Commissioners/CEO: Mr. Mohammad Al Taani

[Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (TRC)]

Orange Jordan has criticized sector regulator the Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (TRC), claiming that the JOD156.4 million (US\$220.11 million) fee to renew its 2G license is 'unreasonably high', the Jordan Times writes. The TRC has instructed the cellco to pay the fee to renew its license for 12.5MHz of 900MHz band spectrum by May 9, or face having its 2G service deactivated. Explaining its decision, the TRC noted that it had contracted a consultation company to conduct a study before setting the renewal price and took into consideration the findings of the investigation, which assessed the current value of the spectrum in the local market. Orange rejected the claims, however, commenting in a statement: 'Orange Mobile considers this amount to be unreasonably high by all international standards and benchmarks...which has also been confirmed by Orange's own comprehensive study that was conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers.' The cellco, which has been vocal in its criticisms of the government's recent policies regarding the sector – including the decision last year to double the level of taxation on mobile services – added that the TRC's decision would have 'unbearable consequences' on its 'capacity to invest in and develop its mobile and fixed networks, as well as its capacity to acquire 4G/LTE frequencies in the future.' Responding to Orange's protests ICT Minister Azzam Sleit cites as saying that the fact that the government holds a 30% stake in Orange Jordan does not entitle the cellco to special treatment regarding 2G license pricing. According to Sleit, the government is due to pay around JOD50 million of the license fee. (May 1, 2014) Petra News Agency

Kuwait**Minister of Communication: Salem Mutheyeb Ahmed Al-Utheina**

[Ministry of Communication (MOC)]

Kuwaiti telco Zain has entered into a new agreement with equipment vendor NEC and solutions integrator Middle East Telecommunications Company (METCO) in order to boost the capacity of its 2G, 3G and 4G Long Term Evolution (LTE) networks. Under the agreement NEC will upgrade Zain Kuwait's backhaul transmission network to meet growing mobile broadband demand using its iPASOLINK series of advanced microwave radio solutions and network management system. The project is expected to be completed by the end of 2014. Noboru Takahashi, President of NEC Saudi Arabia, said: 'As more people switch to LTE phones, it is vital that operators have the backhaul capacity to take the strain and deliver the high speed, high capacity mobile broadband experience consumers want. Far from just making calls, consumers now want to use their phones to do everything from streaming high definition videos to browsing the web.' (May 22, 2014) telegeography.com

Wataniya Telecom announced that it has fully adopted the new global brand Ooredoo. "The move intended to bring a brighter and more enriching future for all the Kuwaiti communities that we serve," Abdulaziz Fakhroo General Manager and CEO of Ooredoo in Kuwait said in a press release. The launch of Ooredoo in Kuwait emphasizes the company's commitment to promoting human growth and offering its customers best-in-class services that enrich their lives. Fakhroo launched the brand in the presence of senior management and employees at the company's new headquarters in Kuwait City. Additionally, the company hosted an event last evening for key media representatives and press in Kuwait to officially unveil the new brand. Fakhroo added "they are very proud today to become part of a community-focused global brand that has a strong desire and sense of responsibility to make a difference in the markets where its customers live and work." "In Kuwait, we will be known not just by the things we do, but how we do them and the unique customer experience that delivers tangible results," he noted. Ooredoo in Kuwait will introduce a revamped portfolio of services. Among its new services is Kuwait's first comprehensive e-commerce range of services, whereby Ooredoo customers will be able to access and buy online exclusive offers on the latest electronic products. Dr. Nasser Marafih, Group CEO, Ooredoo said "Kuwait has always been a core market for Ooredoo, and we are committed to providing the best networks and latest technologies for our customers here." "As we adopt the Ooredoo brand, we will continue to stimulate human growth, reaching out to the people and enabling them to achieve their hopes and aspirations." Ooredoo Kuwait will continue committing itself to supporting life-changing initiatives, including the current support for Bayt Abdullah, the first privately-owned Braille printing for the Kuwait Blind Association, and pioneering in sponsoring a sports arena, which includes three indoor soccer fields to be launched during 2014. Furthermore, Ooredoo intends to launch a range of initiatives to support social development across Kuwait and will promote them through brand ambassadors that are considered role models in the lives of thousands. Abdulla Buftain, the renowned Kuwaiti TV presenter, was announced in September 2013 as a brand ambassador for Ooredoo as he is recognized for his social media influence and prominence with young people in Kuwait. Ooredoo

Group officially announced its new brand name in February 2013 at the GSMA Mobile World Congress in Barcelona, Spain. Since then, the new brand has been adopted by Ooredoo companies across its footprint, and has received international recognition with a series of awards at major global events. The company won several awards since the rebrand and was named "Best Mobile Operator" at the World Communication Awards in 2013. Ooredoo in Kuwait is a member of Ooredoo Group. Commercially launched in December 1999, the company provides mobile, broadband internet and corporate managed services tailored to the needs of customers and businesses. Ooredoo is guided by its vision of enriching people's lives and its belief that it can stimulate human growth by leveraging communications to help people achieve their full potential. (May 22, 2014) kuna.net.kw

Lebanon**Chairman & CEO: Dr. Imad Hoballah**

[Telecommunication Regulatory Authority (TRA)]

Telecommunications Minister Boutros Harb said that the country's two state-owned mobile operators, Touch – managed by Kuwait's Zain Group – and Alfa – managed by Egypt's Orascom Telecom Media and Technology Holding (OTMT) – have until May 12 to improve the quality of their networks or face the termination of their contracts. Harb stated that both operators must repair network malfunctions immediately, following persistent problems of call dropping and call interruptions. Both contracts, currently running under a three-month extension, are due for renewal at the end of June. Harb – who took his ministerial position in February – added that since that month the quality of both networks' services had deteriorated because neither operator had satisfactorily addressed a recent increase in technical malfunctions. 'All subscribers are entitled to uninterrupted calls without being forced to redial the same number three to four times to finish a conversation, particularly [considering] that the citizen is paying a high bill to both companies that is calculating the duration of the call on a per minute rather than per second basis,' the minister said, adding: 'When I took over the ministry, the situation was better and suddenly it started deteriorating. Both operators have failed to assume their responsibilities such as informing me and the office supervisory board of network malfunctions when they occur.' (May 9, 2014) The Daily Star

Morocco**Director General: M. Azdine El MountassirBillah**

[Agence Nationale de Reglementation des Telecommunications (ANRT)]

Etisalat has announced that its proposal to acquire 17% of the minority shareholding in Moroccan incumbent telco Maroc Telecom, which is publicly floated on the Moroccan stock exchange, has been rejected by the country's Securities Commission, Conseil Deontologique des Valeurs Mobilières (CDVM). According to a CDVM press release, in accordance with Article 18 of Law 26-03 'the takeover bid project was declared non-admissible with regards to the national strategic economic interests'; following Decision DO/EM/010/2014, the Casablanca Stock Exchange resumed trading of Maroc Telecom's shares on May 26, 2014. Etisalat, which agreed to acquire Vivendi's controlling 53% stake in Moroccan incumbent telco Maroc Telecom earlier this month, submitted a mandatory tender offer to buy out the remaining minority shareholders in the North African firm in May 2014. The company did not, however, reveal the price per share it proposed; under bourse rules, companies do

not need to offer minority shareholders the same price per share they paid in the majority shareholder acquisition. The Kingdom of Morocco is the second largest shareholder in the Moroccan operator with a 30% stake, while 17% of the company is publicly floated. Meanwhile, Etisalat has secured a US\$500 million grant for the acquisition of the controlling 53% stake in Maroc Telecom. Reuters reports that the funding was provided by the government of Abu Dhabi; the grant comes on top of an 8.7% stake taken by the Abu Dhabi Fund for Development – a state body which provides affordable loans and grants for projects in developing nations – in Etisalat International North Africa (EINA), the legal entity that will hold Etisalat's Maroc Telecom stake. According to unnamed sources, the state will reportedly provide a quarter of the funding for the purchase of the stake, worth EUR4.14 billion (US\$5.64 billion) from France's media group Vivendi, with the rest coming from bank loans.

(May 27, 2014) telegeography.com

Nepal

Acting Chairman: Mr. AnandaRaj Khanal

[Nepal Telecommunication Authority (NTR)]

Nepal's Ministry of Information and Communications (MoIC) has asked the industry regulator, Nepal Telecommunications Authority (NTA), to submit the draft Broadband Policy within the fiscal year. The long awaited policy to stimulate growth in the mountain nation's high speed internet market has been on the drawing board for five years, and shelved until now due to what were terms 'procedural delays'. The NTA has now been given a month to submit the final draft. The government-backed 'National IT Roadmap — a guideline for ICT sector's development for next five years' is considered vital to the development of new infrastructure and e-government in Nepal, setting the agenda on high speed network development and service expansion, according to the NTA. Highlights of the draft Broadband Policy are:

- The setting up of a National IT Roadmap with the task of devising a broadband policy for Nepal
- Setting agendas on broadband infrastructure development and service expansion
- Defining broadband by identifying the minimum speed in kbps to guarantee the quality of service (QoS); and
- Formulating new policy within the master plan to incorporate the recommendations of the Wireless Broadband Master Plan.

(May 30, 2014) telegeography.com

Oman

Chief Executive Officer: Dr. Hamed Al-Rawahi

[Telecommunication Regulatory Authority (TRA)]

The Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) has proposed draft legislation on principles and procedures aimed at regulating access and interconnection in the Sultanate. TRA has formulated the draft rules to promote competition and remove barriers to market entry, as well as to increase high speed broadband coverage, particularly in rural areas. 'The interconnection of networks is critical to the development of competition as it enables one operator or service provider to reach subscribers on another operator's network. As such, the authority considers that all public telecom licensees should be subject to the obligation to interconnect their respective networks to ensure end-to-end connectivity,' the draft legislation states. The TRA adds that it is now seeking 'to review the rules and regulations governing the provision of A&I [access and interconnection] services and to develop a single regulation governing the provision of all A&I services, including those provided by

dominant and non-dominant operators'. The regulator has invited stakeholders, interested parties and the public to comment on the draft regulation by May 25.

(May 8, 2014) The Muscat Daily

Pakistan

Chairman: Dr. Syed Ismail Shah

[Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA)]

Pakistan's telecoms watchdog has confirmed that it is looking to extend the recently auctioned 3G and 4G licenses to include the autonomous administrative divisions of the disputed Kashmir region, Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK) and Gilgit Baltistan (GB). Pro Pakistani writes that the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) is consulting with the Kashmir council and is taking 'all necessary measures' to ensure that the license holders can start offering next generation wireless services in the region. According to the PTA an extension to the licenses is already in the works, but no timeframe was given for the amendment and consumers in Kashmir are expected to see a delay in receiving the new services. Whilst the PTA confirmed that the rights to offer 3G and 4G services in AJK and GB would be offered to existing license holders only, the regulator did not comment on whether an additional fee would be levied. In October 2005 the PTA gave all licensed wireless providers temporary permission to provide services in the region with a view to aiding the rebuilding effort in areas badly hit by an earthquake earlier that month. In June the following year, the permissions were extended for 15 years for four operators at a cost of US\$10 million. (May 19, 2014) telegeography.com

The International clearing house (ICH) operators along with other LDIs (Long Distance and International) will take necessary steps to curb grey traffic, an official said. A new and modern technology will be provided to the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) for curbing the grey traffic more effectively and efficiently within a month, said a representative of the LDI Group – a consortium of 14 LDI operators. He said the LDI group has so far contributed US\$30 million. Besides, the LDI generated one billion dollars foreign direct investment in the last 18 months, he said. ICH – a centralized telecom gateway meant for terminating all international calls landing in Pakistan – earns US\$44 million per month from 500 million minutes. During the last 18 months ending March 2014, the ICH racked up one billion dollars revenue, translating into US\$184 million of estimated income tax. In this period, 11 billion minutes were terminated. The LDI also contributed Rs20 billion to universal service fund. The issue of mobile termination rate on international incoming calls needs to be settled. Previously, the MTR for domestic and international traffic was the same, thus having no incentive for mobile operators to check grey traffic. It may be noted that more than 90 percent of international traffic is terminated on mobile networks. It is high time to set MTRs to control the maximum grey traffic and generate foreign exchange revenue, he said. The LDI Group's representative said that this would increase the minutes per month to 800 million and forex inflow from international termination business from current US\$528 million to US\$844.80 million. He said LDIs are willing to give up certain profit margins to mobile operators. The representative said it is high time for the government to capture the current potential of LDIs because after the launch of the 3G/4G, the voice data within next three to four years will move to over-the-top services, like Viber, Skype etc and LDI will focus to generate revenue from the data termination. Another representative of the

LDI group added the 65 percent of the minutes are from Gulf Cooperation Council countries. And these countries have set higher international termination rates. While the PTA lowered settlement rates for Pakistan, international carriers were still charging higher retail tariffs from their customers, thereby not passing the benefit of reduction. (May 14, 2014) thenews.com.pk

Qatar

Executive Director: Mr. Greame Gordon

[The Supreme Council of Information and Communication Technology (ictQATAR)]

According to data published by Qatar's Ministry of Information and Communications Technology, all segments of the population now have access to internet-enabled ICT devices (and in particular mobile phones), although Smartphones and tablets are yet to 'fully penetrate' the market. In its 'ICT Landscape 2014: Households and Individuals' report, which monitors ICT access and usage behavior in the country, the government is confident that 'use of basic online services such as e-mail, internet browsing, social networking and peer-to-peer file sharing is prevalent across all segments of society'. The study confirms that the ongoing transition towards full access continues apace, and that mobile phones are now used by 'nearly 100% of the population', while Smartphone penetration has reached 65% and laptop ownership has topped 93% – up from 83% in 2012. Moreover, a rapid rise in the penetration of tablet devices means that as many as 52% of Qataris are now connected to the internet via such means, compared to just 32% in 2012. The ICT study goes on to say that whilst 83% of users access the World Wide Web for e-mail and 93% for social networking apps, only 18% use internet banking and 15% e-commerce. Finally, the ministry report notes that with the increase in Smartphone and tablet penetration, the demand for mobile broadband has risen and household penetration now stands at 61%, compared to fixed broadband penetration of 94%. (May 27, 2014) [Gulf Times](http://GulfTimes)

Saudi Arabia

Governor: Eng. Abdullah A. Al Darrab

[Communications and Information Technology Commission (CITC)]

Saudi Arabian telco Etihad Atheeb Telecom (GO Telecom) has announced that the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between Bayanat Al-Oula, a subsidiary of Etihad Etisalat (Mobily), Saudi Arabia's second largest cellco in terms of subscribers, and the main shareholders of GO Telecom for Mobily's acquisition of the Saudi fixed line and broadband operator, has been cancelled. Further, the two companies have also cancelled a side deal, signed in April 2014, under which GO Telecom had been granted the rights to use 50,000 fiber-optic access points in order to provide broadband access and fixed telephony services to residential users and private businesses. Bayanat Al-Oula inked the agreement with Atheeb Trading Company, Batelco of Bahrain and Al-Nahla Trading Company on August 20, 2013. The proposed transaction was subject to regulatory approval by the Kingdom's telecoms watchdog the Communication and Information Technology Commission (CITC) and Saudi Arabia's Capital Market Authority (CMA), and the satisfactory completion of specific commercial, financial, legal and technical conditions; a November 30, 2013 deadline was initially earmarked for the deal's completion. By the end of April this year, Bayanat Al-Oula had successfully completed its 'commercial, financial, technical and legal due diligence' for the deal, and the two

parties were in the process of structuring the proposed acquisition; GO Telecom was seeking shareholder approval to write off up to 100% of its accumulated losses by way of cancelling shares in order to decrease its capital, while Bayanat would thereafter accumulate shares representing 20% of GO Telecom's total share capital by acquiring the founding shareholders subscription rights. (May 29, 2014) telegeography.com

Saudi Telecom Company (STC) has announced that it has passed around 900,000 households with its fiber-to-the-home (FTTH) network. Going forward, the operator will continue to extend the footprint of its fiber network although no time-frame has been provided; the FTTH network supports downlink speeds of up to 200Mbps. STC introduced its FTTH services in August 2010, with the service being available in Riyadh, Jeddah and Dammam at launch. Over 600 locations in sixteen cities/towns were covered by October 2013, and by year-end the company revealed that a total of 830,000 households had been covered by the network. (May 8, 2014) telegeography.com

Sri Lanka

Director General: Mr. Anusha Palpita

[Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (TRC)]

The takeover of cellco Hutchison Telecommunications Lanka (Hutch) by Mobitel, the cellular division of state-controlled Sri Lanka Telecommunications (SLT), which was agreed in February, is still awaiting regulatory clearance because of disagreements over the purchase price. The Treasury has expressed its reservations on the purchase price agreed between the two mobile operators, which according to the source was US\$132 million, US\$32 million higher than a 'ceiling' level of US\$100 million; rival operator Dialog Axiata is reported to have offered a lower price of US\$78million for Hutch. (May 12, 2014) [Sunday TimeS](http://SundayTimeS)

Tunisia

President: Mr. Hassoumi Zitoune

[National Telecommunication Commission (INNT)]

Tunisie Telecom (TT) has begun rolling out 2G and 3G services in the remote, Saharan regions of the country and has launched services in the southernmost point of the nation, at the border with Algeria and Libya. Visiting the region for the launch, ICT Minister Taoufik Jelassi commended TT on its success in connecting the region, despite the significant difficulties posed by the geography of the area. The state-backed operator is rolling out base stations in other settlements in the sparsely populated areas. (May 12, 2014) [News Portal Business News](http://NewsPortalBusinessNews)

Turkey

Chairman & CEO: Dr. Tayfun Acarer

[Information & Communication Technologies Authority (BTK)]

Pyramid Research has issued a comprehensive report on Turkish Telecommunication Sector namely "Turkey Media Market to 2015: Media Services Adoption by Operator." The report provides a top-level overview and detailed insights into the operating environment for mobile operators. It is an essential tool for companies active across the telecom value chain in Turkey and for new companies that may be considering entering the market. This product is part of Pyramid's new 'on demand' range. The report is built on

the foundation of the most up-to-date data at the moment of purchase, guaranteeing their sensitivity to the current state of the market, and facilitating informed business decisions that can be made with the utmost of confidence.

Key Findings of the report are:

- Demographics - Statistical data on Turkey population, households, businesses, nominal GDP, nominal GDP per Capita, consumer price inflation, exchange rates (local currency and US dollar)
- Media services penetration
- Media services adoption by operator
- Media services market share by technology and by operator
- Media services monthly ARPS
- Media services revenue.

Synopsis

This report offers a concise breakdown of Turkey operating environment, with both historic data and forecasts to 2015. The report contains quantitative data which covers:

- Demographics - data on Turkey population, households, businesses, nominal GDP, nominal GDP per Capita, consumer price inflation, exchange rates (local currency and US dollar)
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- Media services market share by technology and by operator
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- Media services revenue.

(May 24, 2014) marketresearchreports.com

Turk Telekom has reported revenues of TRY3.195 billion (US\$1.520 billion) for the three months ended March 31, 2014, up 1.6% compared to the TRY3.143 billion it booked in the same period a year ago. EBITDA for the first quarter increased 4.2% to TRY1.200 billion year-on-year, while net profit dropped 27% to TRY384 million, mainly due to the Turkish lira's (TRY) depreciation against the US dollar (USD) and the euro (EUR). CAPEX for January–March increased 9.7% y-o-y to TRY279 million. In operational terms, Turk Telekom's broadband customer base rose to 7.4 million by March 31, 2014, up 4.2% from 7.1 million a year earlier; of these 682,000 customer accounts were said to be fiber-optic connections. By contrast, fixed PSTN subscriptions fell from 13.2 million to 12.2 million, a decrease of 7.8% y-o-y. Meanwhile, Turk Telekom's mobile unit Avea saw its subscriber base grow 11.4% y-o-y to 15.3 million; of these, seven million were on post-paid plans, up by around one million on an annualized basis. (May 6, 2014) telegeography.com

United Arab Emirates

Director General: Mr. Mohamed Nasser Al Ghanim

[Telecommunication Regulatory Authority (TRA)]

The Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) reported that as of May 18, 2014, 55,555 mobile numbers were successfully transferred out of the 190,185 mobile number porting requests received by telecom operators since the official launch of the Mobile Number Portability (MNP) service in December 2013. The implementation process of the service that enables the switch from one provider to another whilst keeping their original phone number has reached 30%. Moreover, 134,222 applications were rejected, included applications that have been resubmitted more than once by the same owner of the mobile number. The reasons for rejection were identified under the service instructions that are available with service

providers and focus on the mismatch of subscriber's name with the applicant name, or non-completion of a transfer request numbers due to lack of filling the required fields or the lack of clear identification or incorrect attachments. As part of its main role in the UAE, the TRA has increased competition within the ICT market and benefited the consumer through the successful implementation of MNP. The TRA also stressed that the subscribers should be aware of their obligations and responsibility outlined in the contracts signed with the licensee before submitting any MNP requests. The main challenges seen to date include non-compliance with licensees to deliver documentation for the service and failure to complete all the information that will help complete the application process including legibility of attachments and photocopies. TRA has received several complaints from subscribers regarding the rejection of their MNP applications without having a solid reason for the rejection, and is working on verifying many of these cases with the licensees. The Authority will continue to monitor the MNP process along with the accredited service providers in the UAE, and take all necessary actions whenever the need arises. TRA previously requested both "Etisalat and "du" to remove some of their ad campaigns due to them not complying with the regulatory framework.

(May 28, 2014) zawya.com

Etisalat has mandated banks to organize a series of fixed income investor meetings ahead of a potential bond issue. Reuters cites unnamed sources as saying that the UAE telco chose Deutsche Bank, Goldman Sachs, HSBC and Royal Bank of Scotland to arrange the offering. Etisalat, which earlier this month bought a 53% stake in Maroc Telecom from France's Vivendi for EUR4.14 billion (US\$5.65 billion), said the meetings will be held in the UAE, Asia and Europe from June 1. Etisalat expects to conclude a long-delayed network sharing deal with sole rival Du by the end of the year, according to the firm's bond prospectus. A network sharing agreement would break the monopolies held by the pair within their respective areas by giving consumers nationwide the choice of operator for their fixed line voice and broadband services. A trial bitstream service with selected customers was launched in July 2011, but despite beginning negotiations in 2009, Etisalat and Du have been unable to reach an agreement on the matter.

(May 28, 2014) Reuters

Mobile network operator Du has reported its first quarter financials and announced that its revenues rose as did profits although by a slower degree. Revenues were up by 12.5 percent at AED2.96 billion, while net profit was up by 4.8 percent to AED 490 million. The company added just over 306,000 net new customers to take its total base to 7.55 million. Osman Sultan, du's Chief Executive Officer, commented: "This quarter we achieved positive revenue growth and healthy levels of profitability driven by our strategic focus on enhancing the customer experience. We have begun 2014 on a strong footing with double digit growth in revenues and EBITDA by developing innovative propositions for customers and delivering on our commitment to focusing on operational efficiencies."

(May 1, 2014) cellular-news.com



REGULATORY ACTIVITIES BEYOND THE SAMENA REGION

Argentina

The Argentine government has outlined plans to auction off nearly 250MHz of additional radio spectrum. The government will offer licenses for the AWS (Advanced Wireless Services - 1700-2100MHz) and 700MHz spectrum bands for deploying 4G mobile services in the country. As well as 120MHz in the AWS band and 90MHz in the 700MHz band under the APT band plan for 4G, the government also announced the licensing of 7.5MHz in the 850MHz band and 30MHz in the 1900MHz band for 2G and 3G, resulting in a total of nearly 250MHz of spectrum to support the expansion of mobile services in Argentina. Argentina has been in need of new spectrum for mobile broadband as the last auction took place 15 years ago in 1999. "With more than 63 million mobile connections and almost 30 million unique subscribers, Argentina is the third largest market in Latin America and has grown 300 per cent in the last 10 years," said Tom Phillips, Chief Regulatory Officer, GSMA. "This positive decision by the Argentine Government will enable the mobile industry to continue to increase the scope and scale of the mobile services it offers to Argentina's citizens."

(May 15, 2014) cellular-news.com

Brazil

One year after the official launch of 4G Long Term Evolution (LTE) mobile services in Brazil, the country was home to 2.077 million 4G connections by March 31, 2014, while LTE coverage has been extended to 99 cities where around 36% of Brazilians reside, according to data from telecoms regulator Agencia Nacional de Telecomunicacoes (ANATEL) and the SindiTelebrasil telcos association. Despite the relatively poor take-up of 4G, the pair notes that all domestic

carriers were able to launch advanced mobile services within the timeframe established by the watchdog. As at April 1, Telefonica (Vivo) was reportedly the largest player in the segment with around 858,000 LTE accesses, followed by TIM Brasil (676,000), Claro Brasil (321,000) and Oi (222,700). (May 7, 2014) telegeography.com

China

China will allow telecommunications companies to independently decide tariffs for their services from May 10, to promote competition and give a greater role to market forces. China Mobile Ltd, China Unicom Hong Kong and China Telecom Corp Ltd - along with "the market" - will determine the pricing of tariffs, the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology said. The government had previously set pricing bands. The liberalization is part of broader deregulation of a telecoms industry widely criticized as inefficient, and will allow state-owned carriers to target lower income customers in rural areas where much of the potential growth is, analysts said. "All telecom service tariffs will be regulated by the market, and telecommunications companies can independently draw up specific tariff structures, standards and billing methods," the ministry said in a statement on its website. The move could also give mobile virtual network operators (MVNOs) greater independence in how they structure tariffs. Companies such as Alibaba Group Holding, JD.com Inc and Suning Commerce Group Co applied for MVNO licenses last year. The first MVNO was launched last week. China Unicom declined to comment on the tariff liberalization. Neither China Mobile nor China Telecom could be immediately reached for comment. (May 9, 2014) reuters.com

Dominican Republic

Telecoms watchdog the INDOTEL has awarded frequencies in the 900MHz and paired 1700MHz/ 2100MHz spectrum bands to domestic network operators Claro and Orange Dominicana. Claro received Block C (2x5MHz in the 1735MHz-1740MHz/2135MHz-2140MHz band) and Block D (2x15MHz in the 1740MHz-1755MHz/2140MHz-2155MHz band), while Orange was awarded 1x19MHz in the 941MHz-960MHz band. The two cellcos paid a grand total of DOP3 billion (US\$70.5 million) for the spectrum. INDOTEL resumed the long-delayed tender at the beginning of April 2014; the regulator initially sought to make the frequencies available back in October 2011. The companies named as pre-qualified bidders were cellcos Claro, owned by America Movil (AM), Trilogy Dominicana (Viva), a subsidiary of US-based Trilogy International Partners, and Orange Dominicana, which was recently acquired by investment fund Altice Group of Luxembourg. In March 2014, however, INDOTEL was ordered by the country's Administrative Court to halt the tender process as a precautionary measure, until a final judgment was made with regards to an appeal filed by local businessman Armando Bermudez, who claimed that his company – Color Vision – has been authorized to use the frequencies in the 2150MHz-2198MHz spectrum band since 1984. The claim was reportedly dismissed by the COURT. (May 13, 2014) [telegeography.com](#)

France

Telecom regulator said it would open an inquiry into whether low-cost operator Iliad was building out its mobile network fast enough to conform to the coverage obligations required by its license. Iliad, which markets its mobile and broadband services under the name Free, must cover 75 percent of the French population with its mobile network by January 12, 2015. Its rivals have accused Iliad of not deploying mobile antennas fast enough and seeking instead to rely on a roaming contract with Orange, which carries Iliad's traffic while it builds its own network. "The Authority decided to launch an inquiry to ascertain whether Free Mobile is employing all of the means necessary to meet its obligation, and to assess any obstacles the rollouts might encounter," the regulator said in a statement on Tuesday. ARCEP is also opening four other investigations into the quality of service and coverage of France's other telecom groups. Among those is an inquiry into whether mobile groups Orange, Vivendi's SFR, and Bouygues Telecom were fully carrying out pledges to build 3G mobile networks in rural areas. Two other inquiries will look into Orange's unit that services corporate customers and its provision of basic fixed phone lines. (May 27, 2014) [reuters.com](#)

The number of mobile operators in France will be reduced to three from four, insisted economy minister Arnaud Montebourg, as the government seeks to ease competitive pressure and foster broadband investment. France came close to consolidating earlier this year when Bouygues Telecom launched an aggressive pursuit of rival SFR, which was put on sale by parent company Vivendi. Bouygues made no fewer than five offers, and had backing from the government, but ultimately Vivendi chose to sell SFR to Altice, parent company of cableco Numericable, thereby keeping the number of mobile players at four. "We will get there, to having three operators that are able to invest and that will stop destroying jobs and killing each other," said Montebourg. The comments represent a stark U-turn in policy. Regulator ARCEP designed its LTE auction, carried

out in 2011, specifically to encourage a fourth player to acquire spectrum and enter the market. That fourth player was broadband provider Iliad, which launched mobile operations under the Free brand in January 2012, sparking an intense price war. In March, Bouygues likened competition in France and its effect on profit margins to a nuclear disaster. Meanwhile, the combination of SFR and Numericable will create a powerful integrated services provider that can compete with incumbent Orange, and heap yet more misery on Bouygues. (May 14, 2014) [totaltele.com](#)

Germany

German incumbent Deutsche Telekom is demanding a US\$1bn break-up fee be made part of any attempted takeover of its US operation T-Mobile by Sprint in order to approve the deal. The payment, from Sprint to Deutsche Telekom, would be required should an agreed deal be derailed; perhaps blocked by regulatory or competition authorities. In 2011 Deutsche Telekom walked away from the collapsed \$39bn takeover of T-Mobile USA by AT&T with \$3bn in cash, substantial spectrum assets and a favorable roaming agreement. It was able to invest that sum into its network and has performed well subsequently. From June 2012 to March 2014 the operator increased its subscriber base by 48 per cent, from 33.17 million to 49.08 million, according to figures from Informa's WCIS Plus. Over the same period Sprint's subscriber base dropped by 2.8 per cent to 54.45 million, while AT&T's grew 10.3 per cent to 116.04 million and Verizon Wireless' by 9.8 per cent to 121.29 million. And yet the firm's financial performance has not reflected this trajectory. In Q1 this year, despite claiming to have taken "virtually all of the industry phone growth" in the period, T-Mobile USA posted a \$154m loss, down from a \$106m profit for the same period in 2013. The firm cited increased customer acquisition costs as having a significant impact on its bottom line. At the same time, Bloomberg cited unnamed sources close to the carrier in a report that rival operator Sprint was planning to make a bid to acquire T-Mobile USA in June or July this year. The news agency said the operator met with banks in April to make financial arrangements for its offer. (May 13, 2014) [telecoms.com](#)

The federal audit office, the Bundesrechnungshof, has said that the government should consider selling its 31.9% share in the country's incumbent telecoms operator Deutsche Telekom (DT). The Federal Republic owns a 14.5% stake in DT, which operates under the brand Telekom Deutschland, while a further 17.4% is held via state-owned KfW Bankengruppe. Bundesrechnungshof told that the state should examine its holdings, and if there is no longer a public interest in state involvement, the stakes should be sold off. In December last year Germany's Monopolies Commission published a report on competition in the telecoms market in which it recommended the government sell its direct and indirect stake in DT. The independent advisory group said that the state's shareholding presents 'possible conflicts of interest arising from the simultaneous role of owner and regulator,' adding that the proceeds from privatization could be used to fund broadband expansion. (May 12, 2014) [Daily Die Welt](#)

GSMA

The GSMA, which represents the interests of mobile operators worldwide, has announced that senior leaders from nine telcos serving the Middle East, have committed to cutting the cost of roaming charges in the region. The telecom operators, which account for over half a billion

mobile connections across 48 countries in the Middle East and Africa, are undertaking initiatives designed to reduce the cost for consumers, the GSMA said in a statement. Companies making the pledge included UAE-based Etisalat, Kuwait's Zain, Qatar's Ooredoo, Saudi Telecom Company, Orange, the MTN Group, Bharti Airtel, Millicom and Vodafone. GSMA research has shown emerging markets, including many countries in the Middle East, are now the major engines of mobile connection and subscriber growth. "The nine operator groups are committed to a range of roaming initiatives that, in addition to addressing pricing, will improve regional connectivity and mobility by increasing roaming footprints to provide greater customer choice, with a particular focus on improving routes for pre-paid customers," the statement added. The GSMA said these combined efforts will enable consumers in the Middle East to use their mobile phones with greater confidence and predictability whilst travelling. "International and regional mobility is a critical factor in increasing trade and cross-border economic cooperation, which is a government priority across Africa and the Middle East," said Anne Bouverot, director general, GSMA. "The initiatives of these nine operators are intended to serve to increase connectivity and make mobile more affordable for subscribers throughout these regions, encouraging greater adoption and usage of mobile services and enabling important socio-economic benefits." As part of their work, the operators will look at a range of factors that affect roaming prices, with the aim of improving technical efficiencies and reducing costs, she added. (May 30, 2014) arabianbusiness.com

Hungary

Hungarian industry regulator, the National Media and Infocommunications Authority (NMHH) called a tender to sell off a number of 20-year broadband mobile licenses, suitable for 4G/LTE services, as it looks to stimulate developments in the domestic high speed internet market. In its statement, the watchdog confirmed plans to auction off unused parts of the 800MHz, 900MHz, 1800MHz and 2600MHz frequency bands – along with part of the higher, 26GHz band – which it hopes will raise at least HUF104 billion (USD468.7 million) for government coffers. This is the first time that Hungary has made the 800MHz and 2600MHz bands available for high speed wireless services. In the news release yesterday, the NMHH said that interested parties must submit their bids by 16 June, with the winners securing rights on frequencies until 2034; the NMHH had previously indicated the concessions would only be valid (initially) for 15 years. The winners – which are likely to include incumbents T-Mobile, Telenor Hungary and Vodafone – will be announced between 45 and 150 days after the tender is called. 'The concessions provide a sufficiently wide option for the providers to plan and the length of the concession may increase their willingness to invest while also reduces the investors' risks,' the watchdog said.

(May 23, 2014) telegeography.com

India

The Telecom department will soon examine the sector regulator's proposal of using airwaves in the 800 MHz, or CDMA band, as an extended GSM band and clubbing it along with 900 MHz, a step that could heighten tensions between operators using the two technologies. The move - backed by GSM operators like Bharti Airtel, but vehemently opposed by CDMA players like Reliance Communications

and Tata Teleservices - will be part of broad consultations to review the National Frequency Allocation Plan, or NFAP, for drawing up a roadmap for both allocating airwaves and vacating the frequencies held by existing users. The exercise also comes in the lead-up to the spectrum auctions later this year in the 800 MHz, 900 MHz and 1800 MHz bands, and a possible sale of 700 MHz by 2016. The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has held in abeyance its decision on the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India's proposal to make 800 MHz part of the international 900 MHz band, known also as extended GSM or EGSM, which is used by GSM carriers worldwide. This is because companies like RCom, Tata Tele and Sistema Shyam have strongly resisted the proposal, maintaining that the 800 MHz band is designated worldwide for CDMA-based mobile operations. They have also warned that any bid to club, or harmonize, 800 MHz with the EGSM band would grossly undermine their business case as they have invested billions in rolling out CDMA networks in the 800 MHz band. Since GSM and CDMA platforms co-exist in India, the 900 MHz band is truncated and called 'primary GSM' as the higher frequencies of the 800 MHz band (880-890 MHz) are allocated to CDMA operators. Therefore, the 900 MHz band allocated to GSM operators in India is smaller than the EGSM band available overseas. Amid diminishing operator interest in CDMA technology and reducing CDMA subscriber base in India, GSM operators say clubbing the 800 MHz frequencies with the EGSM band would generate additional premium bandwidth and help reduce the number of cell towers required, lower network costs and keep tariffs more affordable. The issue is likely to come up for discussion when a DoT panel headed by the national wireless adviser takes stock of India's current spectrum reserves across bands and maps future requirements as part of the NFAP review. It is likely to also draw up an airwaves vacation roadmap for current users such as the armed forces, intelligence agencies, broadcasters and police departments amid growing spectrum demand for commercial use. The panel "will review the NFAP to ensure spectrum is efficiently and optimally used" amid "proliferation of new technologies" such as fourth and fifth generation and "growing demand for telecom services", says a department note seen by ET. The NFAP is the principal spectrum usage guide for all potential users in India and is the reference document for India's spectrum managers, wireless spectrum users and equipment makers. It also defines the permissible use of each spectrum band. The spectrum allocations roadmap will be drafted based on the assessment of availability and demand of airwaves. The DoT panel will form "three sub-groups that will map future spectrum needs in frequency bands up to 2.5 GHz (gigahertz), between 2.5 GHz and 10 GHz and frequencies beyond 10 GHz", the note says. At present, the bulk of the spectrum used for 2G, 3G and 4G services is within the 2.5 GHz range as a mature device ecosystem is in place around these bands.

(May 13, 2014) timesofindia.indiatimes.com

The Department of Telecom (DoT) is expected to finally assign 2G spectrum to mobile service providers which won the radiowaves in the February auction. The final allocation is expected within a week as process of swapping of frequencies between operators has been completed. "Telecom companies had requested to swap spectrum frequencies won by them in 1,800MHz band so that they can easily provide LTE (4G) services. Frequencies have been swapped and LoI will be sent out as soon as higher

authorities approve it," an official source told. Five out of seven companies - Bharti Airtel, Vodafone, Reliance Jio Infocomm, Idea Cellular and Telewings (Uninor) - have requested for swapping of frequencies. Airtel's spectrum frequencies in Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka and Punjab have been rearranged, Vodafone's frequencies in Haryana, Kolkata, Punjab and UP East are rearranged, Idea Cellular in Punjab, Reliance Jio Infocomm in Kolkata and North East and Telewings (Uninor) in UP East and West. Idea Cellular had sought to change frequencies in Kerala and Vodafone in Delhi with Reliance Jio Infocomm, which did not agree to the proposal due to some technical issues. The government had received bids worth Rs. 37,572.6 crores for 1800MHz, widely known as 2G spectrum, in last auctions. Airtel has won 1800MHz spectrum in 15 out of 22 service area for 9,906.02 crores, Vodafone and Idea in 11 service area for Rs. 8,383.52 crores and Rs. 7,010.83 crores, Reliance Jio in 14 circles for Rs. 11,054.41 crores and Telewings Communications in 5 circles for Rs. 844.72 crores. Other winners include Reliance Communications and Aircel, which won spectrum in one and five service areas, respectively. (May 9, 2014) gadgets.ndtv.com

Japan

Japanese mobile operator NTT DOCOMO has announced that it will conduct experimental trials of what it deems to be '5G' technology with six equipment vendors, namely: Alcatel-Lucent, Ericsson, Fujitsu, NEC, Nokia and Samsung. The parallel trials will seek to establish the potential of the next-generation technology to exploit frequency bands above 6GHz and increase access network capacity per unit. Further, the companies will also trial new radio technologies to support diverse types of applications including machine-to-machine (M2M) services. The 5G platform, which NTT DOCOMO plans to launch on a commercial basis in 2020, is expected to enable ultra-high speed data transmissions of more than 10Gbps, which represents a 1,000-fold increase in the capacity of existing 4G Long Term Evolution (LTE) networks. NTT DOCOMO will begin indoor trials at its Research and Development (R&D) Centre in Yokosuka, later this year, with outdoor field trials planned for 2015. Key findings and achievements will be shared with research institutes to contribute towards 5G standardization, which is expected to commence from 2016. (May 8, 2014) telegeography.com

Kenya

Safaricom is on course to winning a protracted battle with the Communications Authority of Kenya over renewal of its operating licenses that expire next month. In a gazette notice the CAK says the telecom has formally applied for renewal of two primary operating licenses and has invited those with objections to write to it within 30 days. The dominant mobile network operator is seeking the Network Facilities Provider Tier one (NFP-T1) license that will allow it to build and operate telecommunications systems, and the International Gateway System and Services (IGSS) license which will authorize it to link its network to international networks. The application was made in line with section 81 of the Kenya Information and Communications Act of 1998 that provides for the renewal of the two licenses for another 10 years starting July. "The renewal of the licenses may affect public and local authorities, companies, persons or bodies of persons," CAK said in the gazette notice. The regulator had insisted that it will only renew Safaricom's license on condition that it achieves a minimum 80 per cent in voice service performance scores and pays US\$27 million (Sh2.35 billion). All the four mobile operators were found to

be non-compliant in the last assessment report for the year 2012/13, scoring poorly in voice quality, completed calls, call success rates and call drop rate. Safaricom, Airtel Kenya and Essar's yuMobile tied at 50 per cent while Telkom Orange scored a higher 62.5 per cent. Safaricom's performance was unchanged from 2012's when Orange and yuMobile met the target with a score of 87.5 per cent each. Airtel achieved a 62.5 per cent. While the other operators still have time on their licenses, Safaricom's licenses were issued in July 1999 and are due to expire next month. (May 11, 2014) allafrica.com

Mexico

The Instituto Federal de Telecomunicaciones (IFETEL) has reportedly passed new measures designed to make the number portability process more transparent. As per the revised process customers switching providers and taking their numbers with them will now receive a standardized text message from their provider with instructions and a code to switch. 'Messages sent to pre-paid mobile service subscribers will be clearer, more secure and transparent, and this reduces the risk of misleading practices,' the watchdog was cited as saying. In July 2008 the previous telecoms regulator Comision Federal de Telecomunicaciones (COFETEL) oversaw the introduction of fixed and mobile number portability (FMNP); it had originally hoped to introduce the service in 2006, but technical and legal challenges delayed implementation. As of March 2014 meanwhile around 14 million fixed and mobile numbers were said to have switched since the service was introduced, with more than 12.3 million of those said to be switches between pre-paid mobile voice services, 1.57 million between post-paid fixed voice services, and 297,229 between post-paid mobile connections. (May 9, 2014) BNamericas

New Zealand

New Zealand telecommunications regulator the Commerce Commission has cleared Telecom's NZ\$83 million purchase of a final lot of 700MHz spectrum to be used to deliver for 4G mobile services. Telecom has been cleared to proceed with the purchase of the final 2x5MHz lot and to become the only mobile network operator with four lots of 700MHz spectrum. Meanwhile, the Commission has released details of the process it will use to review network operator Chorus' new "Boost" fast broadband plans to ensure they are sufficiently different from the company's regulated products. Telecom Chief Executive Simon Moutter said he was pleased the spectrum purchase has been cleared. "This fourth lot will provide significant benefits to customers in terms of the potential speed and capacity of Telecom's 4G mobile network," he said. "The more of this 700MHz spectrum a carrier has, the faster the speeds it will be capable of offering and the more data it can carry. So this fourth lot puts Telecom in the best position in the market to deliver a very high-performance 4G mobile network for New Zealand, including in less densely populated areas." Telecom has begun trialing its high speed 4G data network over APT700 MHz spectrum, alongside partner Huawei Technologies. Telecom bid \$83 million for the final lot, in addition to \$66 million for three lots in the initial auction round. Vodafone bought 2x15MHz (three lots), while 2Degrees bought 2x10 MHz (two lots). A final assignment round, during which each successful bidder will bid for a location within the spectrum band, is still to be held. The Commerce Commission has also released its process for assessing Chorus' new tiered copper broadband access plans, dubbed "Boost". Chorus developed the new plans after the Commission regulated deep cuts

to the wholesale price the company could charge for its regulated services and submitted the plans to the regulator on 14 May. The Commission is now required to assess whether the proposed services are materially different from regulated copper services and can be priced separately. The Commission said it expects to consult on a draft decision in late June and to release a final decision in late July.

(May 29, 2014) zdnet.com

Communications and Information Technology Minister Amy Adams has announced the two sets of options that will be used for assigning the 700 MHz radio spectrum band between the successful bidders in the Government's recent auction. One set of options for assigning which positions (frequencies) within the 700 MHz band each bidder will acquire will be used if the Commerce Commission decides in favor of Telecom's purchase of 2x20 MHz of the spectrum. The other set of assignment options will be used if the Commerce Commission decides against the purchase by Telecom on competition grounds. These assignment options have been announced in order to facilitate the timely deployment of new cellular networks using this spectrum. The new 4G-LTE networks will be capable of mobile broadband data speeds up to ten times faster than current 3G networks, and the estimated economic gain to New Zealand from using the spectrum in this way is \$2.4 billion over the next 20 years. The 700 MHz band is particularly good for rural coverage. An assignment auction round will be held in the coming weeks, once the Commerce Commission's decision is known. 2degrees, Telecom, and Vodafone were the only registered bidders in the auction. Each was offered the same opportunity in the initial auction round to buy up to 2x15 MHz at the reserve price of \$22 million (+ GST) for each 2x5 MHz paired lot. In the initial round, Telecom and Vodafone both purchased 2x15 MHz for \$66m and 2degrees purchased 2x10 MHz for \$44m, leaving 2x5 MHz unsold. In accordance with the terms of the auction, the remaining 2x5 MHz lot was then auctioned between Telecom and Vodafone, and was secured by Telecom for \$83 million, subject to Commerce Commission clearance. (May 25, 2014) techday.com

Papua New Guinea

Government has reportedly awarded a new mobile network operator concession said to be worth more than US\$ 260 million. Dubai-based multinational AWAL Telecommunications, a unit of AWAL Impex International Holdings Ltd, has been named as the recipient of the license, which according to the website of local telecoms regulator the National Information and Communications Technology Authority (NICTA) was actually issued on March 14, 2014 and is valid for ten years. However, the presentation of the concession was said to have been carried out in a low key event conducted early last month and attended by the Communication and Information Minister and the NICTA's manager of international affairs. Awal has actually been granted three licenses – an Individual Network Gateway Services License, an Individual Application License and an Individual Network License – in order to enable it to enter the country's mobile sector. While AWAL is said to also be examining a possible entry into Papua New Guinea's gas and electricity sectors, telecoms is the group's first priority. To that end, AWAL CEO was cited as saying of his company's plans for the country: 'AWAL will definitely be a catalyst in the development of the country's infrastructure, especially the telecom sector. AWAL's top priority will primarily be at

making the telecom facility available to the entire population of Papua New Guinea by improving the network coverage. AWAL will make sure that Papua New Guinea's telecom network is at par with the international telecom operators.'

(May 8, 2014) Islands Business

Peru

The minister of transport and communications, Carlos Paredes Rodriguez has confirmed that the auction for 700MHz spectrum will take place later this year, announcing the plans at the opening of the Forum for International Telecommunication Day. The 700MHz band will be used to provide 4G Long Term Evolution (LTE) services and follows on the heels of the allocation of two AWS (1700MHz/2100MHz) concessions to Movistar and Americatel Peru, the Peruvian arm of Chile's ENTEL, in July 2013, also for 4G services. Rodriguez also noted that the first phase of the nation's fiber-optic backbone project would be completed in September this year. The tender for the construction was awarded late last year to the TV Azteca-Tendai consortium and will eventually see more than 13,000km of fiber-optic cabling installed nationwide, at a cost of USD400 million.

(May 20, 2014) TeleSemana

Spain

Spain's Lower House of Parliament gave its approval for the General Telecommunications Act earlier this week, the government has revealed in a press release. With votes in favor of the bill coming from the People's Party (PP), the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE), the Convergence and Union (CiU) and the Basque Nationalist Party (PNV), approval of the law by 95% of the votes cast, the state claimed this demonstrated 'the broad consensus achieved between the various parliamentary groups following a considerable effort from all concerned'. In describing the new General Telecommunications Act, the government claimed it laid the groundwork for citizens to enjoy the advantages and services of high speed access to the internet, both at home and while mobile. Further, it said the legislation will act as the cornerstone underpinning the legal regime that governs the telecommunications sector, and called it 'a tool of the highest order for implementing structural reforms in an area being called upon to stimulate the recovery in Spain'. With a total of 179 amendments having been made to the bill during its passage through Parliament, these will reportedly lead to:

- Guaranteed mechanisms for collaboration between the state and other public authorities which will ensure market unity in the telecommunications sector and ensure that network deployments and investments will be facilitated by all public authorities.
- Enhanced guarantees of users' rights, alongside increased information regarding matters of service quality, tariffs and compensations, strengthened user portability rights, and increased penalties for those operators failing to comply with these rights.
- Strengthened and clarified powers for telecoms sector regulator the Comision Nacional de los Mercados y la Competencia (CNMC) in terms of penalties.
- Measures designed to reduce the digital divide and extend broadband access to all.

Separately among the measures approved was a commitment by the government to ensure that the entire population has access to broadband speeds of 10Mbps within the next three years (i.e. by 2017). Looking further ahead, by 2020 all Spaniards are expected to have access to 30Mbps connectivity, while at that date at least half of

the nation should be able to sign up for a service offering 100Mbps downlink rates. Alongside this, the state has also said it will collaborate with the country's autonomous communities in order to ensure that all schools, universities, libraries and health centers have 30Mbps access by 2016 and 100Mbps by 2020. (May 2, 2014) Europa Press

Taiwan

A consolidation of Taiwan's fourth-generation (4G) mobile market is considered by the government to be "reasonable" because the move could bring economy of scale to some operators and help them provide better services, a top government official said. Simon Chang, head of the Ministry of Science and Technology, said Taiwan's current telecom operators are facing stiff competition against each other because the market appears more crowded than in other countries. "If there could be a suitable consolidation of the (4G) market, it could help some carriers grow," Chang told reporters on the sidelines of a local forum on the digital home and multimedia industry. "But growing company size does not equal making more money. A bigger company size could help the operators reach an economy of scale and then bring better mobile services to consumers," he said. The official described a market consolidation of Taiwanese 4G operators as "reasonable" in light of the upcoming operation of Taiwan's 4G LTE network and a government plan to release 4G spectrums that are currently occupied by WiMAX network operators. The remarks came days after Taiwan Star Cellular Corp., a telecom arm of conglomerate Ting Hsin International Group, formally announced a bid May 8 to acquire Asia Pacific Telecom Co. to consolidate the resources of the two companies in 4G LTE operation. Taiwan Star is not the only suitor that aims to acquire Asia Pacific Telecom. Ambit Microsystems Corp., a subsidiary of Hon Hai Precision Industry Co., also proposed May 8 a bid to buy Asia Pacific Telecom. Taiwan Star is one of two new telecom services providers in Taiwan that secured a 4G telecom license in October 2013, the other being Ambit Microsystems. Four other telecom operators that already provide 3G services in Taiwan -- Asia Pacific Telecom, Chunghwa Telecom Co., Far EasTone Telecommunications Co. and Taiwan Mobile -- have also obtained 4G licenses. (May 12, 2014) focustaiwan.tw

Thailand

The starting bid prices for Thailand's auction of two 900MHz band mobile spectrum licenses planned for November have been set at THB10.76 billion (USD332 million) for a 2x10MHz license and THB8.07 billion for a 2x7.5MHz concession, based on a recommendation by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) of THB538 million per MHz for paired uplink/downlink frequencies, a source at the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC) was quoted by The Nation as saying. The NBTC's telecom committee is expected to approve these reference prices this week. The ITU has recommended that the starting price for a 900MHz band should be equivalent to 70% of the spectrum's 'full value' of THB768.5 million per MHz – THB537.95 million – which is 16% higher than the THB484 million price per MHz set for the 1800MHz auction scheduled for August. (May 7, 2014) telegeography.com

Trinidad & Tobago

UK-based Cable & Wireless Communications (CWC), the 49%-shareholder in majority state-owned fixed and mobile operator Telecommunications Services of Trinidad & Tobago

(TSTT), has confirmed that it has applied for the country's third mobile operating license which has been put up for tender by the Telecommunications Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (TATT). The regulator has confirmed that six applicants have responded to its Request for Proposals (RFP) for new mobile frequencies and/or a new mobile network operating license, while CWC's CEO Phil Bentley confirmed to the Trinidad & Tobago Guardian that the group specifically applied for the latter, in a separate action to TSTT's application for new 3G/4G spectrum, adding that: 'We've always said we want to invest in Trinidad and that we have to explore all options of doing so.' Meanwhile TSTT told that: 'TSTT's management has not been informed by TATT of any of the applicants that have expressed an interest in being the country's third mobile provider. If CWC has, in fact, submitted a response to TATT's invitation for a third mobile provider, this would best be a matter for TATT to comment on.' TATT confirmed that following the closing date of April 30, 2014 it opened six bid responses to its RFP aimed at attracting providers of advanced mobile data services in the 700MHz, 800MHz and 1900MHz spectrum bands, which came from TSTT and rival cellco Digicel, CWC and three unidentified prospective new entrants. The watchdog said that it expects to complete the tender evaluation process within three to four months, suggesting that 4G LTE services could be launched in the country by the end of this year. TATT published the RFP in September 2013 for three specific competitive licensing tenders:

- a new mobile network operating license for a potential third operator;
- the award of 800MHz and 1900MHz band spectrum to any eligible mobile operators; and
- the award of 700MHz (4G) spectrum to any eligible mobile operators.

CWC has recently presented proposals to the government of Trinidad & Tobago for taking a majority stake in TSTT, including a pledge to invest US\$100 million in the country over three years on projects including comprehensive 4G mobile broadband deployment, corporate data connectivity improvements and subsidized community ICT access ventures. However, the UK firm's bid to take majority control of TSTT is by no means guaranteed to succeed, with opposition from quarters including the local Communications Workers Union.

(May 14, 2014) Trinidad & Tobago Guardian

United States

The FCC has been given the go ahead to bring partially subsidized broadband speeds to around 14 million households. The plan was on hold after several telephone companies sued the FCC back in 2011, but with a successful appeal, the wheel is back in animation. The program is known as Connect America, and it is the largest portion of the \$8 billion Universal Service Fund that target schools, low-income families and others. The idea is to deliver telecommunication links to people who may never experience it due their location. Back in 2012, the FCC noted in a report that nearly 14 million households were without high-speed broadband internet service. If you're not aware, the Connect America plan not only aims to deliver broadband connection to new homes, but to use a small portion of customer bills in other areas to help fund the expenditure. This is one of the reasons why telecommunication companies were up in arms and wanted to stop what the FCC planned to do from going forward. You see, the plan based on these companies, threatened to eat into the subsidies they receive. The cost of this whole plan will begin at \$300 million and up

to \$500 million as part of the annual budget. "Congress has directed the commission to ensure that all Americans receive the benefit of 21st-century communications," Kim Hart, an F.C.C. spokeswoman, said in a statement. "With today's across-the-board affirmance of our landmark 2011 reforms, the commission has tools in hand to accomplish that critical goal." This is an important victory for the FCC, as the decision comes at a time when net neutrality is being seriously challenged in the United States. Earlier this month, the FCC proposed a set of rules that will either permit or ban ISPs from requiring that some companies pay up for faster Internet connection to their services. At the end of the day, it all comes down to the final vote later this year. By then, we should have an idea where the Internet is going, and what steps consumers in the United States would have to take. It is clear that if ISPs get the upper hand, consumers will be forced to pay more for the services they use, and that's never a good thing. (May 27, 2014) [techtimes.com](#)

U.S. regulators advanced a "net neutrality" proposal that would ban Internet providers from blocking or slowing down access to websites but may let them charge content companies for faster and more reliable delivery of their traffic to users. For four months now, the public can weigh in on the rules proposed by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) in what promises to be an intense tug-of-war between some tech companies and consumer advocates on one side and Republicans and broadband providers on the other, over the extent to which the agency can regulate Internet traffic. Dozens protested the vote at the FCC on Thursday as many consumer advocates have rejected FCC Chairman Tom Wheeler's proposal that may allow some "commercially reasonable" deals in which content companies could pay broadband providers to prioritize traffic on their networks. Critics worry the rules would create "fast lanes" for companies that pay up and mean slower traffic for others. Wheeler pledged to use all of his powers to prevent "acts to divide the Internet between 'haves' and 'have nots.'" "I will not allow the national asset of an open Internet to be compromised," Wheeler said. "The prospect of a gatekeeper choosing winners and losers on the Internet is unacceptable." Consumer advocates want the FCC to instead reclassify Internet providers as utilities, like telephone companies, rather than as the less-regulated information services they are now. Broadband companies and Republicans, both in Congress and at the FCC, vehemently oppose the plan. The advanced proposal seeks comment on benefits of reclassification, which critics say would throw the industry into legal limbo, discourage investment in network infrastructure and still not prevent pay-for-priority deals. Wheeler's two fellow Democrats at the FCC expressed misgivings about his proposal, with Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel saying the FCC moved "too fast to be fair." But she and Mignon Clyburn concurred with Wheeler for a 3-2 vote to begin the process of collecting public comment on the proposal. "The real call to action begins after the vote today," Clyburn said. "You have the ear of the entire FCC. The eyes of the world are on all of us." The FCC's move comes after a U.S. appeals court rejected its earlier net neutrality rules, which said pay-for-priority deals "would raise significant cause for concern." To comply with the court, the new proposal suggests some pay-for-priority deals may be allowed, but also asks whether "some or all" such deals can be banned. "The FCC's efforts were dealt a real challenge by the Court of Appeals in January, but Chairman Wheeler has said his goal is to preserve an open Internet, and we are pleased to see that he is keeping all options on

the table," the White House said in a statement, adding they will watch the independent agency's work "in hopes that the final rule stays true to the spirit of net neutrality." The FCC's vote was cautiously welcomed by both broadband providers and consumer interest and technology groups as each side hopes the ultimate rules lean their way. "Nothing should be taken off the table as this discussion evolves," Michael Beckerman, chief executive officer of the Internet Association that represents companies including Google Inc and Facebook Inc, said in a statement, adding that his group will "advocate for the FCC to use its full legal authority to enforce rules that lead to an open Internet."

(May 15, 2014) [reuters.com](#)

The US telecoms regulator has set a US\$10 billion reserve price on the radio spectrum it is planning to auction off later this year. Technically, it is seeking US\$10,066,326,600 for the paired spectrum bands (1755-1780/2155-2180 MHz licenses) in the AWS-3 auction. The auction (dubbed Auction 97) has also been confirmed as starting on the 13th November. The 65 megahertz of AWS-3 spectrum available (1,614 licenses) will be licensed on a geographic area basis. Of those, 880 will be by Economic Area (EA) and 734 will be Cellular Market Area (CMA). The frequencies will be licensed in five and 10 MHz blocks, with licenses available for five, 10 and 20MHz. The smaller blocks may also make it easier for smaller bidders to buy up lots. That 65 will be the largest amount of spectrum auctioned since the FCC's 2008 auction of the 700 MHz spectrum. The revenues from the auction are earmarked for the construction of a nationwide public safety broadband network for use by State and Federal agencies. Next year, the regulator plans another auction that could raise double the amount, at around USD20 billion due to the spectrum being offered being more favorable to the mobile networks. (May 21, 2014) [cellular-news.com](#)

Vanatu

The Telecommunications and Radiocommunications Regulator (TRR), has opened a public consultation on the potential allocation of the 694MHz-803MHz frequency band for 4G Long Term Evolution (LTE) or LTE Advanced (LTE-A) wireless broadband services in the country. The TRR has published a consultation document, which provides background information with regards to 700MHz LTE deployments in other countries and outlines the watchdog's plans. According to the document, the spectrum currently available for distribution in the 700MHz band comprises of 2x45MHz frequency division duplex (FDD) blocks. The watchdog invites all interested parties to submit their comments on any aspect of the spectrum allocation process by June 13, 2014. (May 1, 2014) [telegeography.com](#)

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Big Data: An Opportunity combined with Privacy Concerns A Regulatory Perspective



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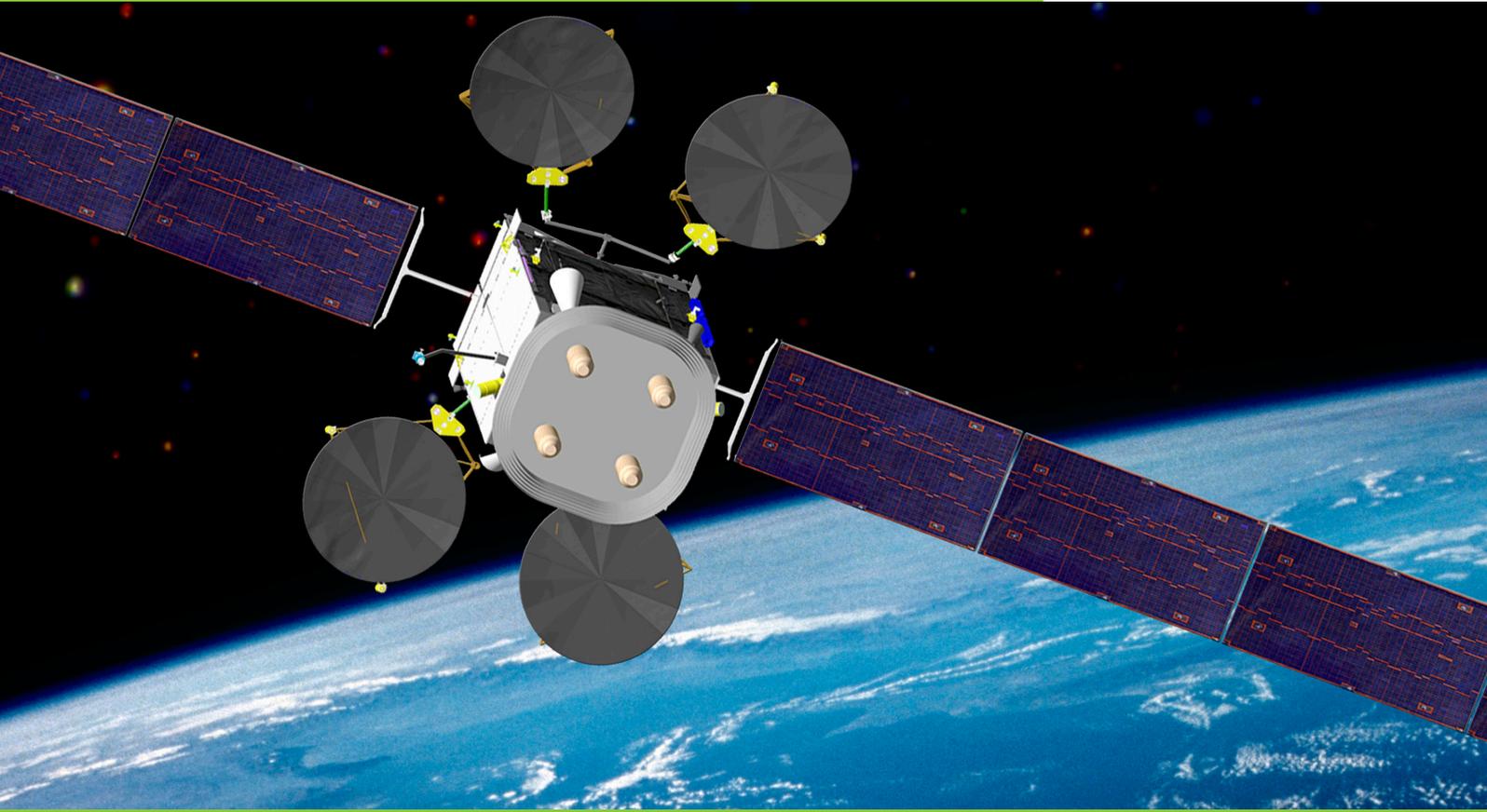
“Big Data” a new term that is currently trending within the ICT industry and is getting into sharper focus especially from privacy and security concerns. With the incredible growth of data produced/consumed by Internet users through the different types of social networks and mobile apps, the need for a strong but flexible legal and regulatory framework is increasing and becomes mandatory as well. Such regulatory measures should be developed in a smart manner that in one-hand incentives Internet Players and Telecom Operators to explore new revenue streams lying behind Big Data and at the same time grant the basic Internet user a secure private cyber space.

The first aspect of Big Data regulations, which should be taken into account while formulating Big Data policy framework, is not to hinder investments by giving operators and Internet service providers the ability to easily explore and tap into new revenue streams such as the ones resulting out of Big Data. In the SAMENA region, operators are under pressure resulting from strong regulatory interventions, such as high licensing fees, new spectrum costs, hidden taxes, and royalty fees. This massive pressure in terms of CAPEX is faced at the same time by strict regulatory obligations to provide a high level quality of services at affordable rates. International roaming flat rates regulations is a clear example that illustrates to which extent telecom operators are facing regulatory pressures which is negatively affecting their revenues growth. Therefore, the Big Data concept, which is described, as “New Oil” should be regulated while having it in mind as a new revenue generation opportunity for telecom operators and service providers. If Big Data is the “New Oil”, then Broadband, which is provided by operators, is the Vehicles through which this new oil is consumed. For

operators to be able to provide such super speed reliable broadband, the question of their sustainability is to be placed first. The role of governments and regulators is crucial in formulating and putting in place a clear set of industry friendly policies; such policies are crucial in identifying the methodology and level of data utilization, data quality, access, and preservation.

Secondly and most importantly is the question of privacy, security and data protection when it comes to Big Data regulations. For example, social networks privacy settings are switched off per default reflects a key concern that needs to be revisited when setting policies and regulations for web2.0 services. Privacy settings should be developed and displayed in a very simple way that enables the basic user to adjust his privacy and security preferences in a straightforward manner. Also, the traditional way of displaying the terms and conditions of any newly Internet service subscription is another concern that requires simplification and redesign, so instead of having long pages full of tiny fonts text to for example a video tutorial available in different languages. Another interesting example is the management of the user's online assets, personal data, email accounts, social media profiles after death. Google has recently introduced tools that apply to all Google-run accounts, including Gmail, Google+, YouTube, Picasa and others. Users have the option to delete data after a certain period of time or pass their data on to specified people.

No one can deny that privacy is a corner stone for setting any Big Data policy framework, but it is also important not to let such concerns to hinder innovation. The opportunity resulting out of data mining and analysis across different sectors is creating a deep positive impact in the overall national economy. Government has an important role to play in encouraging big data use in fields including health care, education, road safety, weather prediction, financial reporting, mapping and macroeconomic forecasting. Collected once and used many times is the most efficient methodology in the adoption of Big Data concept. This saves time, processing power, and cost; therefore, government and private sector are to be in alignment and synchronization when it comes to sharing data and information, while maintaining a certain level of privacy and transparency. At the same time, there is should be a clear distinction between data collected and processed by government agencies or private sector entities on a national level with those collected as a result of the international bulk of data transfer. Some arguments are stating that: "It is unacceptable that governments and intelligence agencies are abusing the increasing international data transfer for bulk access to the transmitted data". The question of "Trust" when using new Internet service is in a big threat and for this trust to be rebuilt both technical and policy solutions needs to be implemented. Data encryption, secure routing, and IPv6 adoption are considered amongst the technical solutions. International agreements, regional cooperation, dispute resolution mechanisms, and commercial settlement processes are examples of public policy considerations.



SATELLITE NEWS

New experiments to fly on Europe's last ATV cargo ship

Designed for a dual mission to deliver cargo to the International Space Station and conduct technological experiments for future space projects, Europe's final automated resupply spacecraft is set for liftoff the last week of July after a previous commercial Ariane 5 rocket launch was postponed by a problem with an Australian telecommunications satellite. At the end of the mission early next year, engineers at the ATV control center in Toulouse, France, will guide the spaceship back into Earth's atmosphere at a shallower angle than any mission before. NASA wants to collect data on the ATV's re-entry to test their computer models as officials plan for the final days of the space station, when the outpost will crash into a remote stretch of the South Pacific Ocean sometime in the 2020s. ATV 5 is next in Arianespace's launch queue after a commercial Ariane 5 launch was postponed to resolve an issue inside the propulsion system of the Australian Optus 10 communications satellite. Owned by SingTel Optus, the Optus 10 satellite will be transported from the Ariane 5 launch base in Kourou, French Guiana, back to its Space Systems/Loral manufacturing plant in Palo Alto, Calif., according to John Celli, president of SS/L.

Preventing data fraud on Airlines' 'Endless Wish List' for connectivity

President of TMF Associates Tim Farrar looked out at the 300-plus aviation professionals at the inaugural Global Connected Aircraft Summit (GCA Summit) and took a guess. "Maybe it's the connectivity bubble," he said, in an effort to explain the unusually dense attendance to a closing session of a first-year conference. While Farrar painted a bleak picture for airlines' direct revenues from connectivity services, the airlines executives themselves saw opportunity in the savings that come with operational improvements for the cockpit, customer service and ground maintenance. Dan Smith, principal engineer of avionics engineering for Hawaiian Air, an aviation executive representing connectivity uninitiated airlines, said his company is attracted to fuel savings that are possible through real-time weather data and in-flight updates to navigation charts. "You can save a lot of fuel with good communication," said Smith, adding that Hawaiian Air plans to participate in Inmarsat's new SwiftBroadband evaluation providing free position location data off-loading services in response to the loss of Malaysia Airlines' MH370. "The thing about SwiftBroadband is that the position data, latitude and longitude, heading [and] groundspeed are just part of the metadata that goes along with the transaction — all you have to do is do some housekeeping every minute or 15 minutes and the data is there. The Malaysia 370 loss, [which is] really tragic, could never happen [with continuous position data]," he said.

Thales Alenia Space to build a joint satellite for Inmarsat and Hellas-Sat

The MSS payload is designed to deliver an S-band service across all 28 member states of the European Union; the FSS/BSS coverage zones are Europe, Middle East and Southern Africa. The Inmarsat S Europasat payload will offer enhanced mobile services across Europe through a hybrid network, which combines S-Band satellite services with a Complementary Ground Component (CGC) infrastructure. Inmarsat S Europasat will serve the aviation passenger connectivity services, as well as the safety services for Public Protection & Disaster Relief (PPDR) all over Europe. The Hellas-Sat 3 payload will deliver DTH and Telecom services in its designated coverage areas, maintaining and expanding Hellas-Sat business reach with additional capacities. As program prime contractor, Thales Alenia Space is in charge of the design, production, testing and On Ground Delivery (OGD) of the satellite. It will also take charge of the launch campaign, and will support the customers for the Launch and Early Operations Phase (LEOP) and In-Orbit Tests (IOT). Built on the Spacebus 4000 C4 platform from Thales Alenia Space, Inmarsat S Europasat / Hellas-Sat 3 will deliver a multi-beam mission in S-band and Ka-band for Inmarsat as well as a powerful Ku/Ka-Band mission of 44 Ku and 1 Ka transponders for Hellas-Sat. The satellite will weigh about 5.9 tonnes at launch and will offer payload power of about 12.3 kW. Inmarsat S Europasat / Hellas-Sat 3 will be positioned at 39° East.

KazSat-3 satellite reaches its orbital position

KazSat-3 communication satellite assisted by a Proton-M carrier rocket has reached the designated orbital position, Tengrinews reports referring to the press-office of Kazkosmos, the National Space Agency of Kazakhstan. KazSat-3 satellite reached the working point at 58,5°E in a geostationary orbit. While in transfer to the designated orbital position, KazSat-3 satellite went through a part of the flight tests of the support system module to confirm its technical parameters. The ground-based control center in northern Kazakhstan's town of Akkol and Reshetnev Information Satellite Systems company, Russia's leading space enterprise, are now jointly preparing for flight tests of the satellite's payload. The flight tests are expected to be completed in the middle of September 2014. On April 28, 2014 an upgraded version of Russian launch vehicle Proton-M took off from Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan carrying the third Kazakh telecommunications satellite KazSat-3 and a Russian relay satellite Luch-5V. The new Kazakh satellite will work in tandem with KazSat-2 launched in 2011. The satellites are designed so as to back up one another in case of failures. There was also KazSat-1 satellite, but after operating for some time it stopped responding to the ground control and was subsequently lost altogether. By launching these two communication satellites, Kazakhstan becomes more independent from foreign communications and broadcasting systems. Use of its own satellites enables Kazakhstan to save \$30 million annually. In addition, the launch of KazSat-3 will consolidate Kazakhstan's orbital position with the International Telecommunication Union.

Signalhorn builds on version 1.0 tests of new satellite gateway

Signalhorn has released version 1.0 of its new customer gateway to a small group of clients to get feedback on the development process. The project, which started in 2011, was reinvigorated by an award from the European Space Agency (ESA) as part of the Advanced Research in Telecommunications Systems (ARTES) program. Signalhorn is currently using the feedback to continue developing a satellite gateway that will also attract more wireless and terrestrial players. "We tested the portal with a handful of selected customers in late 2013 and the feedback was very encouraging," Andy Frost, VP of strategic business development told Via Satellite. "More importantly, it contained useful direction and guidance for Signalhorn on how best to develop the portal further to suit these customers. As a consequence, we took the decision with the project team to stage the release to specific groups of customers based upon the availability of key features that provided insight into the particular platforms used to deliver service to them." The next step in development is a series of staged releases that support Signalhorn's managed router offering, Xtend. The company's Xtend solution is a hybrid intelligent network that combines satellite, terrestrial and mobile technologies along with supported Single Channel Per Carrier (SCPC) platforms. The larger release is scheduled for later this year.

Operators add worldwide communications with low-cost Flyht Dragon system

Calgary, Canada-based Flyht Aerospace Solutions has developed the Dragon, a low-cost Iridium-based portable satcom system that draws on the company's expertise in airborne telecom. Selling for less than \$10,000, Dragon allows pilots and passengers to communicate using voice or data, without the need for an expensive certification and installation approval program. The Dragon device is not just for voice and texting, however, but also taps into Flyht's flight-following and aircraft situational display (ASD) capabilities. Pilots and passengers use Apple iPads to connect to Dragon, which also plugs into the pilot's headset or the aircraft's audio panel. The Dragon iPad app allows users to make phone calls and send and receive email and text messages anywhere in the world via the Iridium satellite network. Operations departments can also use Dragon to send information to pilots, such as notams and weather updates. For commercial operators, Dragon automatically records out, off, on and in times for accurate flight-time recordkeeping. Dragon can also feed ASD systems for flight-following purposes. Chinese company Aircraft Data Communication has tested and approved Dragon for input into its global aircraft management system, according to Flyht.

Orbital, SpaceX gain repeat customer with Thaicom

Replicating a teaming arrangement that achieved success in the January launch of the Thaicom 6 communications craft, the Bangkok-based telecom operator says it will select Orbital Sciences Corp. and SpaceX to build and launch another television broadcasting satellite. The company says the Thaicom 8 satellite will be completed around the first quarter of 2016. Thaicom 8 will meet demand for Ku-band communications services in Thailand, South Asia and Africa and replace aging satellites. The medium-sized satellite is to be manufactured by Orbital Sciences and launched by SpaceX's Falcon 9 rocket. Thaicom announced the plan in a filing with the Stock Exchange of Thailand dated April 29. The company said it expects to enter into agreements relating to the satellite in May. Thaicom 8 will carry 24 Ku-band transponders and weigh approximately 3,100 kilograms, or about 6,800 pounds, when fueled for launch. The satellite will have an operating life of 16 years. Including expenses for the satellite, launch, ground segment and insurance, the Thaicom 8 project is expected to cost \$178.5 million. The Thai operator turned to Orbital Sciences and SpaceX for the Jan. 6 launch of the Thaicom 6 satellite, which represented a \$160 million investment for Thaicom when it initiated spacecraft and launch contracts in 2011. Thaicom 6 was the second commercial communications satellite to fly on SpaceX's Falcon 9 rocket, which industry officials say is well-sized for Orbital's medium-class spacecraft platforms.

Regulatory approval process could determine AT&T's ATG success

AT&T's decision to enter the in-flight Wi-Fi market with an Air-to-Ground (ATG) system puts the company in direct competition with existing providers of in-flight connectivity services. By partnering with Honeywell Aerospace for hardware, and building thousands of additional towers, AT&T plans to offer 4G LTE service through a new ATG network by 2015. If successful, the telecom giant could challenge Gogo, who uses a combination of ATG and satellite to connect passengers. But before this can happen, AT&T will need regulatory approval from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) for spectrum rights, and the Federal Aviation Association (FAA) for installing equipment on planes. AT&T spectrum must be cleared for ATG usage by the FCC. As Gogo currently owns all the FCC spectrum licenses designated for an air-to-ground network, this announcement presumes that AT&T will be given FCC permission to use terrestrial wireless designated spectrum for air-to-ground," Jim Breen, CFA at William Blair, said in a research note. "While spectrum issues are at the top of the FCC's list of priorities, we believe the focus is more on the land-based market, and therefore approvals would take time."

AT&T ups interest in DirecTV

AT&T reportedly has upped interest in acquiring DirecTV, which is also fielding merger scuttlebutt from No. 2 satellite operator Dish Network. Similar to the ongoing merger between cable giants Comcast and Time Warner Cable, satellite and telecom operators are seeking to consolidate as a means of gaining leverage with content holders — the latter's increasing retransmission fees a principal driver of the

mergers. In addition to securing larger numbers of bundled pay-TV channel subscribers, multichannel video program distributors are looking to consolidate their broadband offerings as more consumers look to over-the-top video for their entertainment. According to media reports, the talks are at the preliminary stage with no timeline or certainty a deal would even be reached. Regardless, Comcast and Verizon's recent interconnection fee settlements with Netflix underscore the clout major ISPs wield in a digital market where video streams must navigate distribution channels controlled by third parties.

Xplornet purchases all of ViaSat 2's Canadian coverage

Xplornet Communications has secured all the residential capacity covering Canada on the ViaSat 2 satellite to deliver faster Internet speeds and data throughput to its Canadian customers. The satellite is scheduled to launch in mid-2016. Xplornet purchased network operations, annual network maintenance, gateways and ground equipment from ViaSat in the same contract. The company is also allowed to order ViaSat Broadband System subscriber terminals. "The Xplornet team has performed exceptionally in Canada and ... our new satellite is expected to approximately double the bandwidth economics of ViaSat 1 while simultaneously providing a coverage footprint that is seven times larger," said Rick Baldrige, president and COO of ViaSat. Xplornet currently offers high-speed satellite Internet options through the ViaSat 1 satellite. The expected total coverage of ViaSat 2 includes areas in North America, Central America, the Caribbean, a small section of northern South America and the main aeronautical and maritime transatlantic routes between North America and Europe.

Inmarsat chooses Telemar SpA as Value Added Reseller for Global Xpress

Inmarsat has selected Telemar SpA as a Value Added Reseller (VAR) for its Global Xpress High Throughput Satellite (HTS), targeting Europe's government market. Telemar was appointed as the first GX VAR for maritime in 2012, and has experience serving the maritime, government and enterprise markets. The two companies have worked together for more than 30 years. "Telemar has been a significant partner for Inmarsat over many decades," said Andy Start, president of Inmarsat Global Government Services. "With its broad and well-established international VSAT experience, Telemar is a natural GX partner for Inmarsat. We are very pleased to welcome Telemar as a GX VAR in the Global Government sector and we look forward to working very closely with them to grow a successful and long-term GX business." The first Global Xpress satellite, Inmarsat 5 F1, is on track for starting commercial service by mid-2014. The satellite was launched in December 2013. The full constellation will comprise three satellites and is expected to provide global coverage by the end of the year.

Avonline Broadband extends contract with Avanti

Avonline Broadband has signed a multi-million dollar contract with satellite operator Avanti Communications, in a deal that will extend the company's broadband solutions to its European consumer and enterprise customers. Avonline will offer broadband connections to be deployed over Avanti's Hylas 1 and Hylas 2 satellites. "We have worked closely to create a series of unique satellite broadband packages that are tailored to meet the specific service requirements of our growing customer base," said Mark Wynn, managing director at Avonline. These packages provide an instant broadband solution for the important minority of homes and businesses that remain neglected and un-served by the traditional providers."

Sat Space Africa expands capacity leased on Yamal 402 Satellite

Sat Space Africa, an Internet services provider on the African continent, has increased the capacity it uses from the Yamal 402 satellite. Since the company started using the Russian satellite's capacity in October 2013, it has increased the volume of leased capacity twice. To provide services based on iDirect Evolution technology, Sat Space is using a teleport in Rugby, United Kingdom. Forward links, uplinked in the European Beam of Yamal 402, are downlinked in the Southern Beam of the satellite thanks to the cross-connection possibility between the beams. Sat Space's operational center is providing its customers with English, French and Portuguese 24-hour support from Namibia. "Yamal-402 will provide us with excellent Ku-band coverage for the Central and Eastern parts of Africa. We can now offer satellite Internet services in all of sub-Saharan Africa to our customers, many of whom have pan-African service demands," said Shimri Lotan, managing director of Sat Space Africa.

Two Indonesian Satellites call dibs on the same orbital slot

Indonesia's Bank Rakyat Indonesia (BRI) has set itself on a collision course with Indonesia's Indosat satellite operator by ordering a satellite to be placed into the same orbital slot as a satellite ordered by Indosat a year ago, industry officials said. BRI announced April 28 that Space Systems/Loral (SSL) will build the C- and Ku-band BRISat spacecraft, which will be launched in 2016 aboard a European Ariane 5 rocket. Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, who has backed the BRI project, attended the contract signing ceremony in Jakarta. The announcement comes after PT Indosat ordered the Palapa E satellite from Dulles, Virginia-based Orbital Sciences Corp. in mid-2013, citing license approval from the Indonesian Communications Ministry. Both satellites are intended to operate from Indonesia's 150.5 degrees east orbital slot, where the aging Palapa C2, in inclined orbit, continues to provide service but is no longer able to furnish much of its original television offering. Orbital Sciences spokesman Barron Beneski on May 1 said the company's contract with Indosat continues to advance toward a 2016 launch, and that the work had not been suspended or otherwise affected by the BRI announcement. Space Systems/Loral similarly confirmed that the BRI contract was firm and definitive.

SSL chasing satellite orders unaffected by ViaSat patent case

MDA Corp. of Canada on May 1 said 90 percent of the bids for commercial telecommunications satellites that its Space Systems/Loral (SSL) division is chasing are unaffected by the patent-infringement litigation between SSL and its former customer, ViaSat Inc. The 10 percent that may be affected because of their relevance to the three patents ViaSat said SSL has misappropriated are being "worked with design solutions that eliminate any potential issues," MDA Chief Executive Daniel E. Friedmann said. ViaSat has won an initial jury award against SSL of \$283 million in damages for patent infringement related to high-throughput broadband technologies used on satellites. SSL and its former owner, Loral Space and Communications of New York, are appealing the verdict. ViaSat said that in addition to the damages award, it is asking for a court ruling that would prohibit SSL from continuing work on satellites under construction that ViaSat alleges use patented technologies. In a May 1 conference call with investors, Friedmann said MDA and SSL have studied the possible consequences of the ViaSat patents on their current and future work to determine design modifications to SSL satellites that may be incorporated to avoid patent liability. "As far as [satellites in SSL's factory], if there's an issue and it's material, there will be a press release," Friedmann said. "At this moment there is no press release." MDA purchased SSL in November 2012. Under the purchase agreement, Loral Space and Communications agreed to take control of SSL's defense against the ViaSat allegations, and to indemnify MDA for costs related to an adverse ruling.



ROAMING NEWS

Bell reduces roaming rates in South Korea

Bell has continued its roaming price cuts by reducing the voice and data rates for those travelling to South Korea.

These new prices follow similar price slashes from last year in the United States, Europe, China, Japan, Mexico where customers can hop on the new \$30 plan for 50 MB of data (used to be \$40 for 20 MB). In addition, the 'enhanced' \$100 Travel Data Pass gets bumped up to 200 MB data from a previous 50 MB. As for voice, there are a slew of changes. A new \$30 package gives 60 minutes, previously \$40 for 50 minutes, and the \$45 voice and text bundle has been jacked up a bit to include 60 minutes of voice, unlimited incoming texts and 200 sent messages. Finally, pay-per-use calling has been reduced by a buck to \$2 per minute.

Wade Oosterman, President of Bell Mobility, said, "As smartphones have become an essential travel companion, Bell has worked with our international suppliers to lower roaming costs for Canadian consumers travelling worldwide. We're proud to add South Korea to the fast-growing list of countries where Bell has significantly reduced the cost of both data and voice roaming."

RCom drops roaming charges, introduces flat rate

In a huge bonanza for customers, Reliance Communications announced the launch of One India, One Rate Plans, which offers free incoming national roaming offer for post-paid and pre-paid GSM customers.

Under this offer, there will be no difference between local, STD and roaming charges and customers will be charged only their local home plan tariffs, even while roaming anywhere in India. This is the first time an operator has introduced free roaming packs across all circles and even on calls received from other networks.

With the One India, One Rate Plans, customers will no longer have to worry about using their phone while roaming or making STD calls. Non-Reliance customers can also avail themselves of these plans on their existing mobile numbers by porting into Reliance through attractive MNP offers.

CICRA backs Sure's decision to cap roaming charges

CICRA (the Channel Islands Competition and Regulatory Authorities) has backed a decision by Sure to cap its roaming charges and has urged other operators to follow suit.

The pan-Channel Islands telecoms operator, Sure, announced that mobile phone users will be able to put a spending cap on their accounts while travelling abroad of £10, £20, £50, £100, £500 or £1,000 per month. Alternatively customers could opt-out of data roaming altogether or choose to have no limit in place. Customers will receive a message once their spending limit has been reached and data access will then be blocked. It will not affect customers call or texts. CICRA interim chief executive, Michael Byrne, said: "CICRA's has been calling on operators to put in place safeguards for users so that they can use their phones broad without fear of "bill shock"". "The system already operates successfully throughout the European Union and has assisted in reducing cases of 'bill shock' for travelers there. We hope that all operators will follow Sure's lead.

"Until the caps are formally introduced by all Channel Island operators we strongly recommend that customers seek advice from their mobile phone provider on how to manage or disable data roaming on their device before going abroad."

Aircel launches roaming recharge in Mumbai with 350 free minutes

Aircel, on Monday has launched a new roaming recharge RC 299 in Mumbai, which will enable Aircel customers to enjoy first 350 minutes of incoming or outgoing calls on Aircel roaming network without any charge.

In addition, once the customer exhausts free 350 minutes talk time they can enjoy roaming tariff of incoming calls at 1p/sec and outgoing calls at 1.5p/sec. Aircel customers both existing and new will enjoy best value for money offer at a minimal price of Rs. 299, available only in Mumbai.

"Although being a late entrant in the Mumbai circle, Aircel has witnessed a remarkable growth and we attribute it to the customers who adopted our extra value for money products. We truly cherish the relationship with our customers and RC 299, which is first of its kind in Mumbai, will offer our customers convenience and enable them to stay connected during their travel anywhere in the country.

South Africa: Costs of communicating have to drop: Communications Minister

The costs of communicating have to drop, Communications Minister Yunus Carrim said recently. "Clearly, the costs have to come down. It's not just in the interests of the poor and disadvantaged but the economy as a whole," Carrim said in a statement following a meeting with the Independent Communications Authority of SA (Icasa). "We urge the mobile operators to co-operate with Icasa in providing the necessary information and in other ways to ensure that this process is finalized expeditiously."

He said the meeting was to discuss progress made on the broadband value chain analysis study, feedback on the mobile termination rates, and regulatory measures required to implementing "SA Connect".

SA Connect is South Africa's broadband policy. The main item discussed was Icasa's progress on the cost-study analysis on mobile termination rates after a court decision in March, Carrim said.

RCS&RDS inks national roaming agreement with Vodafone

Romania Cable Systems (RCS&RDS) has signed a two-year national roaming contract with Vodafone Romania, which will see the expansion of its mobile footprint. Valentin Popoviciu, business development director of RCS&RDS. 'This is an obligation that was stipulated in the licenses acquired by operators in 2012. All operators are compelled to offer national roaming, under commercial terms. We have discussed [the issue] with [all of] the operators in the market and eventually reached an agreement with Vodafone. We are currently developing our 900MHz and 2100MHz networks, so the number of customers who will be switching to the Vodafone network in will not be too high'.

Speaking at a press conference, Popoviciu noted that the company has activated its 900MHz network, and expects to cover 500 locations by year-end. Meanwhile, the company boasts 2100MHz 3G coverage of approximately 78% of the territory (65% of the population). However, RCS&RDS will continue to prioritize its 3G network for the foreseeable future, rather than upgrading to 4G Long Term Evolution (LTE) like its rivals Vodafone, Orange and Cosmote.

Roaming charges in East Africa set to come down

Roaming charges in East Africa are to come down after the governments of Rwanda, Uganda and Kenya promised to sit down and discuss the best modalities of bringing down the charges. This is according to Dr Fred Matiangi, Kenya's ICT cabinet secretary, at the just concluded Connected Kenya summit held in Mombasa, who added they have so far identified key factors contributing to the exorbitant calling rates.

"The expensive roaming rates come from the different tax regimes levied in the respective countries," said Matiangi.

Leading Kenyan operator Safaricom in October increased its international calling rates to East African Community (EAC) countries following new taxes on international calls from the Kenyan government, but recently the operator introduced new roaming bundles for its subscribers travelling across the region.

HumanIPO reported in September the Kenyan government had called on African mobile networks to lower their roaming charges for international calls, but Safaricom chief executive officer (CEO) Bob Collymore urged governments to consider easing taxes levied on mobile operators within the region in order to put an end to high roaming charges.



TECHNOLOGY NEWS

SingTel Mobile launches LTE-A 300Mbps service

SingTel Mobile, working with equipment partner Ericsson, have successfully launched the first 300Mbps LTE-Advanced (LTE-A) service in Singapore – double the current maximum peak speed of 150Mbps. In a joint release, the two said that they achieved downlink speeds of up to 300Mbps using LTE-A carrier aggregation by combining 20MHz of bandwidth each from the carrier's 1800MHz and 2600MHz bands. SingTel Mobile now plans to expand the LTE-A service as consumer devices supporting the technology become more widely available in the city-state. Commenting on the launch, SingTel's acting managing director of networks, Tay Yeow Lian, said: 'Our customers are seeking higher speeds for their increasingly bandwidth-hungry applications. At SingTel, we are constantly upgrading our networks with the latest technologies to deliver the fastest and most consistent mobile services to meet their digital lifestyle needs. We were the first to launch nationwide dual-band 150Mbps 4G, and are now excited to raise the bar to 300Mbps.'

Cisco enables NOS to deploy broadband and video convergence

Cisco announced that following the success of NOS' Internet Protocol (IP) video services, the leading Portuguese service provider has successfully validated Cisco technology to enable the efficient delivery of video and broadband

(DOCSIS) services over a single access infrastructure, enabling optimized network usage and reduced operational expenses.

According to a report from Ovum, only four months after launch, 94 percent of NOS Iris subscribers were actively using additional cloud video services. This, in conjunction with growth in Internet traffic, has significantly increased pressure on NOS' broadband infrastructure, creating the need for a flexible network approach.

By combining delivery of video and broadband services with the Cisco Converged Cable Access Platform (CCAP), NOS will be able to efficiently manage its infrastructure to address varying demands on its digital video and IP traffic. Utilizing the Cisco Evolved Services Platform (ESP) to provide software orchestration that manages the capacity migration from video into DOCSIS on the Cisco CCAP platform, NOS will be able to move capacity between video and broadband services, providing greatly improved service agility.

Euskaltel launches TV everywhere platform

Euskaltel has launched a multiscreen TV everywhere platform, Edonon. The pay-TV service of the regional telco, operating in Northern Spain, will initially be available on computers and tablets.

Edonon will still be in beta testing for a few weeks and the telco intends to launch the final version as soon as it's ready. Euskaltel is aiming to improve its services to compete with the country's largest pay-TV platforms which are already offering online and mobile video services. With no price increase, Euskaltel's service will offer up to 50 live streamed channels plus a video-on-demand (VOD) catalogue with nearly 1,000 movies and series. In addition, over 20 of the broadcaster's channels are also offered in HD.

The service is available only for computers and tablets (iOS and Android), although the company expects to expand the platform to smartphones, smart TVs and consoles.

Oracle releases solutions for LTE operators to combat device theft

The solution supports device registration for long-term evolution (LTE) smartphones and other LTE-connected devices and enables communications service providers (CSPs) to connect to the Central Equipment Identity Register (CEIR), the global registry of blacklisted devices maintained by the GSMA, it said in a release. CSPs committed to combating handset theft and improving customer service is looking to implement databases to disable lost and stolen mobile devices, it added.

By disabling the devices and keeping them from operating on mobile networks around the world, CSPs can protect consumers and help reduce criminals' incentive for theft.

Vodafone's Dutch arm picks Edgware for FTTH delivery

US-based distributed video delivery specialist Edgware has deployed its Distributed Video Delivery Networks (D-VDN) solution on Vodafone Netherlands' network, to enable the telco to deliver its 'Vodafone Thuis' service to its fiber-to-the-home (FTTH) subscribers. Ruud van den Oosterkamp, IPTV project lead at Vodafone Netherlands, said: 'Edgware's highly scalable D-VDN Solution enabled us to rapidly deploy advanced video services over our high speed fiber network'. In a press release, the pair confirmed that the implementation of the vendor's D-VDN solution enabled the launch of Thuis over Vodafone's fiber-optic network following the acquisition of fellow Dutch FTTH provider Wiericke last year. The FTTH service was rolled out in less than six months and offers three 'all-in-one' packages, including high speed internet (50Mbps, 100Mbps or 500Mbps), phone calls, an extensive video-on-demand (VoD) library including movies and series, as well as 53 digital TV channels with a ten-day catch up library from public broadcasters and channels. The Edgware-supplied D-VDN is described as 'a highly optimised IP video delivery solution that enables operators to quickly implement and scale a full range of services with true pay-TV quality to all devices'.

AT&T building 4G LTE in-flight connectivity service

AT&T announced plans to launch a high-speed 4G LTE-based in-flight connectivity service for airlines and passengers in commercial, business and general aviation. The service, planned to be available as soon as late 2015, will be capable

of providing in-flight broadband for customers including fast, reliable Wi-Fi and onboard entertainment. Following launch, aviation customers can also expect improved connectivity solutions such as cockpit communications, maintenance operations and crew services. "Everyone wants access to high-speed, reliable mobile Internet wherever they are, including at 35,000 feet". To deliver this new service, AT&T plans to build an innovative air-to-ground network in the continental United States, based on global 4G LTE standards, to provide fast speeds and efficient utilization of spectrum already owned by AT&T. As the architect and operator of the nation's most reliable 4G LTE network, AT&T has the expertise, spectrum and financial strength to transform airborne connectivity. In-flight connectivity is a natural fit for AT&T, which over the past six years (2008 to 2013) has invested more than \$140 billion into its wireless and wireline networks, when you combine capital investment and acquisitions of spectrum and wireless operations, and already operates the nation's most reliable 4G LTE network.

Facebook announces plans for second Iowa data center

Facebook's first data center in Altoona, Iowa, won't be fully operational until 2015, but the company has already made plans to expand. The company plans to build a second data center, roughly the same size as the first Altoona location, according to a post on the Altoona Data Center's Facebook page. The second data center will also be located at Facebook's Altoona campus. Since construction began on the first Altoona data center in 2013, more than 460 people, a majority of whom are from the area, have worked more than 435,000 hours on the site. Once completed, the building will measure at 476,000 square feet. The City of Altoona Planning and Zoning Board is due to review Facebook's plans on April 29, before taking the proposal to the Altoona City Council on May 5. "Pending the council's approval, we'll break ground on the new building shortly," Facebook wrote. In addition to its Iowa site, Facebook also has data centers in Oregon, North Carolina and Luleå, Sweden. The second Altoona center will not only be about the same size as the first, but will also feature a similar layout. When the first Altoona data center was announced in 2013, Facebook promised to invest a minimum of \$299.5 million in the project, and was awarded more than \$18 million in tax credits through a job-creation program.

Facebook has room to build as many as three data centers on its 194-acre site. According to The Des Moines Register, the state of Iowa has provided the company with a 100 percent property tax rebate extending 20 years as an incentive to continue building in the state.

Gigaclear begins Underriver FTTH broadband rollout

Gigaclear has begun construction work on a new fiber-to-the-home (FTTH) broadband network serving the rural Kent community of Underriver. Kicking off this month, the installation comes courtesy of almost £2 million of investment from Gigaclear and will see ultrafast, future-proof connectivity extended to nearly 2,000 homes and businesses in the village. Residents approached the network operator after growing frustrated at the poor quality of their existing broadband service, which typically provides speeds of just a few Mbps. Properties included in the FTTH rollout will be

able to access speeds of up to 1,000Mbps – approximately 60 times faster than the UK average. Matthew Hare, Chief Executive of Gigaclear, said the support of local residents has played a major part in the success of the project to date. “We look forward to seeing the community reap benefits from the network in the short and long-term future,” he added. As well as working on the Kent rollout, Gigaclear is bringing FTTH connectivity to several rural Oxfordshire communities, with Otmoor last month confirmed as the latest location to benefit.

Systems C100G selected by StarHub for nationwide deployment

Casa Systems, a worldwide leader in next-generation cable edge technology, announced that StarHub, Singapore’s second-largest info-communications service provider, has selected the company’s C100G CMTS solution following an extensive evaluation process that included several competing chassis.

StarHub operates an island-wide HFC network that delivers multi-channel pay TV services as well as high-speed residential broadband services. Under the terms of the multi-year agreement Casa Systems will replace all of StarHub’s existing CMTSs with its Integrated CCAP, C100G platform. “StarHub conducted an extensive evaluation of all of the major vendors’ CMTS products, and determined the C100G was the best short and long term solution for us as it is highly scalable and gives us cost savings in operating the cable network,” said Mock Pak Lum, CTO of StarHub. The company selected Casa Systems for its advanced system design that delivers exceptional operational cost savings, and its Software Defined Cable (SDC) architecture that enables rapid rollout of advanced features without costly hardware upgrades and downtime. “StarHub is truly one of the leading Tier 1 MSOs in Asia,” said Jerry Guo, president and CEO of Casa Systems. “They are a successful, forward thinking company that is highly respected throughout Asia. We are very pleased to have earned StarHub’s business and look forward to helping them roll out new services in the years to come.”

Myanmar inks new subsea internet cable deal

At the end of March, Myanmar Post and Telecommunications (MPT) signed a contract to bring a new subsea Internet cable to Myanmar. Projected to be completed in early 2016, the cable should bring more stability to the country’s often teetering Internet connection. MPT was one of 15 signatories at the construction contract signing ceremony in Kuala Lumpur on March 7th. The planned 20,000 kilometer cable, officially known as the SEA-ME-WE-5 consortium cable system, will stretch from Singapore to France and land at 17 different countries along the way. Internet users in Myanmar have grown accustomed to government announcements blaming recurring Internet slowdowns on disruptions to the country’s only subsea Internet cable, the similarly-named SEA-ME-WE 3. The new cable will be able to transfer 100 Gigabits of information per second, and will provide a much needed backup option for sustained connectivity. For comparison, the current SEA-ME-WE 3 cable is capable of only 10 Gigabit per second. SEA-ME-WE 5 will land in the

seaside town of Ngwe Saung before traveling to Patheingyi, Yangon, Mandalay, and up into China. The new Internet cable could potentially be the first of several. In late January, 17 countries signed an agreement for another cable project known as Asia-Africa-Europe-1 (AAE-1), which traces a similar route to SEA-ME-WE 5. Some published maps for AAE-1 show Myanmar as a landing spot for the cable, while others omit the country altogether. When asked if they had joined the consortium, MPT said simply, “We are still deciding.”

100Mbps MTN fiber-to-the-home commercial launch announced

MTN announced that it plans to commercially launch 100Mbps fiber-to-the-home (FTTH) services in South Africa on 1 June 2014. MTN said that it demonstrated its FTTH offering to residents of Monaghan Farm, a gated estate located 30km north of Johannesburg, on 12 April 2014. “MTN is currently rolling out aggressive deployment to high-density urban areas, such as high-end gated communities, boomed-off suburbs and high-rise buildings,” MTN said in its statement. The operators said that advanced discussions are underway with several other residential sites. “The roll-out is a demand-driven extension of the company’s already fast-expanding fiber connectivity backbone, utilizing Gigabit Passive Optical Network (GPON) technology, to business parks and residential estates in all major cities,” MTN said. “We are massively excited by the momentum that our pre-launch has already created,” Eben Albertyn, chief technology officer of MTN SA is quoted as saying. “By pioneering the technology in South Africa (and indeed Africa, for the current set of speeds on offer), we are sealing our position as the provider of choice.” According to MTN, the estimated connectivity date for homes in the Monaghan Farm estate is mid-May, with in excess of 60% of the residents having signed up. Offers vary based on desired Internet speed, ranging from 10 to 100 Mbps.

Viber for iOS gets a new update

Viber is a very popular VoIP application which is available on all major mobile platforms, and was recently acquired by a Japanese company Rakuten for \$900 million. Recently, the folks at Viber pushed an update for its iOS application, bumping it to version 4.2, and introduced a totally revamped design, which goes with the look and feel of the new iOS 7. It’s been over six months since Apple released the new OS, but it’s still a good thing that Viber is catching up with it. It’s not just the redesign, Viber 4.2 also brings a number of new handy features to the app, including the ability to send multiple photos and videos at the same time, block any number or contact and much more. “This is the first time we are introducing a new look and feel for Viber. Our goal was to create a simple and friendly interface but at the same time establish a solid foundation for future updates,” Talmon Marco, Viber CEO. Here’s the complete change log of the new Viber for iOS: A complete redesign, compatible with iOS 7, send multiple photos and videos at the same time, block list – now you can block any number or contact, send longer video messages, and bug fixes. If you’re a regular Viber user, head over to the iOS App Store and grab the application. Let us know if you like the new design and interface of the app.



WI-FI OFFLOAD WILL NOT REDUCE THE NEED FOR MORE MOBILE SPECTRUM



Stefan Zehle
CEO
 Coleago Consulting

Faced with massive increases in data traffic, the mobile industry is talking increasingly about Wi-Fi offload. A key question for mobile operators is whether Wi-Fi offload reduces the growth in mobile broadband (HSPA and LTE) traffic and thus the need for more mobile spectrum.

Research presented by Deutsche Telecom from tests in Hamburg and Rotterdam showed that when Wi-Fi is advertised and available free of charge in a particular area this immediately generates substantial Wi-Fi traffic but does not reduce the volume of mobile data traffic. Towerstream Inc. presented conflicting evidence from their outdoor Wi-Fi offload network in New York.

From other findings presented it is clear that both Wi-Fi and LTE traffic are increasing dramatically. Perhaps what is at work here is Jevons paradox, which proposes that as technology progresses, the increase in efficiency with which a resource is used tends to increase (rather than decrease) the rate of consumption of that resource. The increasing availability of free Wi-Fi coupled with a rapid uptake of smartphones and cheap tablets would underpin this theory as one feeds off the other.



The growth in Wi-Fi is also driven by the desire of shops and malls to engage with shoppers on their in-store Wi-Fi network. There is marketing value to retailer of having a shopper on their Wi-Fi network as soon as the shopper walks into the store. EE of the UK is turning this into a small business line, equipping supermarkets such as ASDA in the UK with a Wi-Fi infrastructure. Rather than identifying shoppers at the checkout when they swipe their loyalty card, ASDA hopes to be able to identify and engage with shoppers from the minute they are in the store's Wi-Fi coverage. For example, coupons could be sent to a handset at the beginning of the shopping trip and can be used right away rather than languishing at the bottom of a shopping bag. This is just one of many marketing benefits of free in-store Wi-Fi.

What ASDA does in the UK may be highly relevant in the Middle East, for example in the large shopping malls in Dubai or Doha.

The simultaneous growth in Wi-Fi and LTE traffic may also be explained by the fact that Wi-Fi has other uses compared to cellular. The proliferation of TV Anywhere apps turns tablets and laptops into TV outlets and in Canada Bell has launched the first Wireless TV proposition. TV over Wi-Fi creates a surge of Wi-Fi traffic in residential areas. Other devices in offices, public indoor spaces, and outdoors rely increasingly on Wi-Fi connectivity because it is cheaper and more flexible than cable connections. This all takes Wi-Fi capacity in cities and raises the Wi-Fi noise floor.

As regards the rapid adoption of tablets, all are Wi-Fi enabled but few are 3G (HSPA) or LTE enabled. As people take these tablets out of their homes they will look for Wi-

Fi access thus increasing Wi-Fi hotspot usage. However, smartphones have a personal hotspot feature and where tablets are not in Wi-Fi coverage we are seeing "cellular on-loading" from Wi-Fi devices.

Having paid for a shiny new LTE device, some customers would prefer pay another €10-20 a month rather than having to fuff about with logging onto Wi-Fi. Asking smartphone users to choose between LTE and Wi-Fi is the antithesis of a ubiquitous mobile broadband experience. However, Wi-Fi 2.0 with SIM based authentication increases the ease of Wi-Fi access and may even be transparent to the user.

Another factor which determines the amount of LTE vs. Wi-Fi traffic are the policies for applications set in smartphones, i.e. what bearer is allowed or what bearer is preferred for which application. Some apps do not work via LTE, for example FaceTime on the iPhone. In the US the first version of the iPhone5 with iOS 6 in the US did allow FaceTime over LTE. This came as bit of a shock to cellular operators and AT&T blocked FaceTime over cellular on most plans, but subsequently changed the policy. What cellular operators really want is to be able to set policies dynamically based on the app, the location, time of day and perhaps even the type of customer.

Nevertheless, most mobile operators have some Wi-Fi offload strategy. The focus is not so much on relieving congestion in busy areas but to deliver an "always best connected" value proposition. In short, LTE and Wi-Fi are complements and the growth in Wi-Fi does not reduce the need for more cellular spectrum to serve the growth in mobile broadband traffic.



MOBILE WORLD CONGRESS (MWC) WRAP-UP: OTT VS. TELECOMMUNICATIONS CARRIERS – 2:0



Andre Popov
Partner

Peppers & Rogers Group

Peppers & Rogers Group

Recently, Barcelona played host to the annual Mobile World Congress, where telecom carriers, consumer electronics makers, digital players, and others came together to promote new ideas, gadgets, and ways of doing business in the telecommunications industry. The show is becoming increasingly important as mobile communication, commerce, entertainment, and information have become our way of life. What happens here can impact businesses and consumers around the world.

There was no shortage of news at this year's conference,

Our take: WhatsApp's success comes on the back of telecommunications carriers that—by our estimates—lose already \$7 to \$8 billion in SMS text revenues just due to WhatsApp. Facebook will give WhatsApp access to more resources and an even larger user base of 1.11 billion users, allowing it to accelerate its growth. With the addition of voice and video calling, WhatsApp is well positioned to kill billions of dollars of voice revenues very much like it killed SMS text revenues. Although the rise of OTT's will drive demand of data services that benefit telecommunications carriers, the loss of legacy voice/SMS revenues and cost of providing data connectivity make the economics for carriers challenging.

which we look at here through a customer strategy lens. The more interesting pieces of news came from OTT players:

Over-the-top (OTT) players are growing up:

The biggest buzz was around Facebook's acquisition of mobile messaging app WhatsApp for a whopping \$19 billion. The company has only about 55 employees, which averages to roughly \$400 million per employee. Indeed, Facebook values WhatsApp slightly less than U.S. operator T-Mobile, which has a \$24.9 billion market cap and generate \$24 billion in revenues with 38,000 employees. To put it into perspective, reporters at Slate.com remarked that WhatsApp is worth more than "the Hubble Space Telescope, Iceland, American Airlines, and Gap."

Our take: This is a 180-degree turnaround from past years, which saw telecommunications companies seek to create their own services to compete head-on with OTT's with their own services. But met with limited success, some players like Comcast realize that they would rather seek cooperation than try to compete or impede services like Netflix. Telcos may have finally realized a grand tenet of customer strategy—it's not about finding customers for your products, it's about finding the right products for your customers that meet their needs and serve them where and how they want to be served.

An item is only worth as much as someone is willing to pay for it. And Mark Zuckerberg was willing to pay billions for a small app that today generates relatively little revenue. What WhatsApp has going for it is an engaged, worldwide customer base: "450 million monthly users, 70 percent of whom are active on a given day," according to Forbes. Customers subscribe to the service for \$1 per year, and they provide valuable customer data to the company. The site averages 1 million new registered users per day, and Zuckerberg predicts it will reach 1 billion users worldwide. Its customers are satisfied, consistently use the service, and are willing to pay for it, a rare feat in the online world. "WhatsApp's extremely high user engagement and rapid growth are driven by the simple, powerful and instantaneous messaging capabilities we provide," said cofounder and CEO Jan Koum in a statement.

If you can't beat 'em, join 'em.

OTT players, who benefit from the connectivity provided by telecom carriers, have always been considered a threat. Google, Facebook, Netflix, Skype, and WhatsApp are just some examples of companies that make their money based on the telecom industry's infrastructure, sometimes cannibalizing the services telcos provide. Until now, telecom providers have been trying to fight the threat by limiting access, slowing speeds, and creating their own competing services. But that strategy hasn't worked, so they're beginning to cooperate instead.

Netflix and U.S. cable provider Comcast announced a partnership whereby Netflix will pay to access Comcast's network directly. The deal will increase streaming speeds for Comcast users by as much as 30 percent, and Comcast will

Our take: The show was full of wearable gadgets and embedded Internet-enabled devices. All of these products and services reflect that the "telecom" industry is expanding into other areas of our lives. Telecom is actually everywhere. Innovators are pushing boundaries, and traditional companies will need to keep up. Tomorrow's digital, phablet, tablet, laptop, smart watch, fitness band and mobile phone-wearing, digital consumers will require ubiquitous connectivity for all of their devices. At a minimum, this creates an opportunity for telecommunications carriers to provide data connectivity to consumers everywhere. But the bigger opportunity might be in providing commerce, entertainment, information and other services to consumers. The question is which players in the digital ecosystem will step in to fulfill the needs of the multi-device wearing digital consumer?

generate revenue that may offset infrastructure investment. Telcos are becoming smarter by teaming up with OTT players, instead of fighting them. Their mutual success is dependent on friendly cooperation and collaboration, not fights that degrade service and customer satisfaction.

Devices everywhere:

Consumer electronics giant Samsung unveiled its new flagship phone the Galaxy S5, powered by the Google Android operating system. But more notable is Samsung's continued push into wearable technology with its updated smart watch line-up and new fitness band Gear Fit. With its marketing and distribution might, Samsung could drive adoption of yet another form factor of mobile devices into the mainstream. To power their new slew of devices, Samsung is set to introduce new digital services such as its music service Milk Music, following the footsteps of Apple's iTunes.

Noticeably absent from the conference was Apple, which around the same time announced its first foray into automobile operating systems, set to power the next generation of cars from Ferrari, Mercedes Benz and Volvo.

Conclusion

What is notable about MWC this year is the lack of innovation coming from telecommunications carriers, and how everyone else in the digital ecosystem is innovating around them at light speed. Old school telco CEOs are still debating how to protect their oligopolies by challenging regulatory regimes around net neutrality. At the same time, digital CEOs in their 20s are creating services that generate billions of dollars of value nearly overnight. It is clear that legacy voice and SMS revenues are set to disappear in a few years. The question is who will develop and benefit from the emerging data services? 2014 was yet another year in which OTTs clearly show who is driving the bus. 2:0.



HOW TELECOM COMPANIES CAN FIND GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN THEIR CUSTOMER BASE



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To an increasing degree, telecom companies are struggling to compete and grow in many emerging markets using the favored strategies of the past. Their underlying assumption—that there are still new users to acquire, and that these new users would compensate for price reductions—no longer holds in often heavily saturated markets. To improve performance, companies should view their customers in a completely different way, not as an indistinct mass, but as individuals with specific needs for whom offerings should be tailored accordingly.

Telecom companies' traditional approach, taking consumers as large averaged groups, is not yielding results because it is now much more difficult to use price as a lever to create growth. Companies face a challenging climate of intensifying competition, more sophisticated consumers, higher acquisition costs, flat rate packages, and the erosion of traditional telecom services by over-the-top entrants such as Skype and WhatsApp.

In response, emerging markets telecom companies should take an Analytical Marketing approach, identifying pockets of value within their customer base. Rejecting the one-size-fits-all mindset of the past, some organizations have begun to understand that sustainable performance relies

on developing a long-term relationship with each unique customer. Growth will result from the combined profitability of many different micro-segments of customers.

Analytical Marketing is the process of mining Big Data for commercial purposes. It extracts actionable, real-time insights from all available data to improve understanding of individual customers and their ongoing behavior, thereby targeting them with customized and appealing products and services.

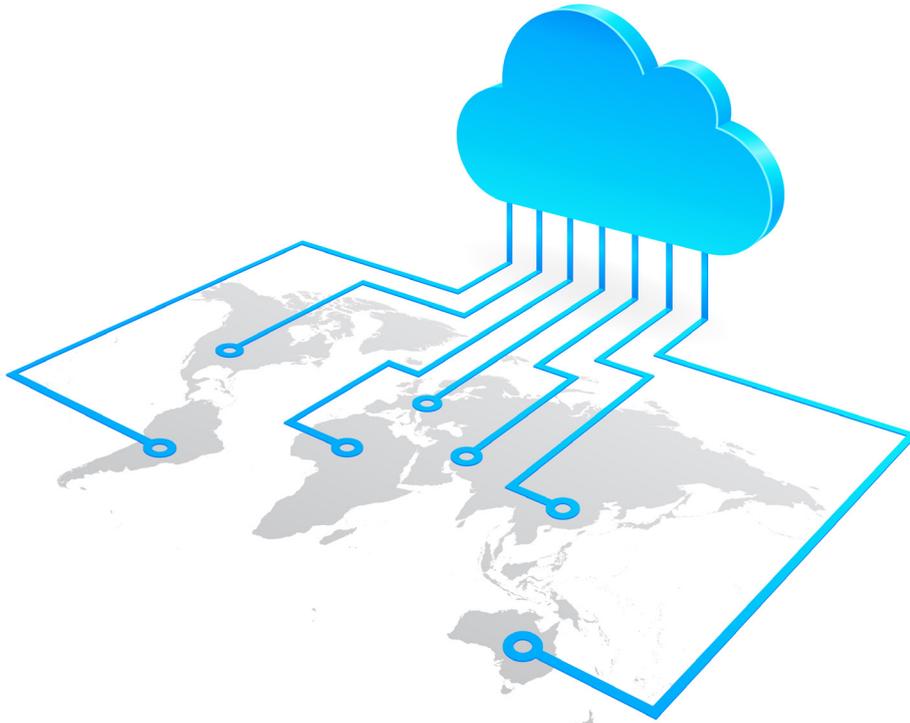
For example, a mobile operator might detect that a customer in the United Arab Emirates often sends texts to a friend in Oman, and therefore suggest an add-on with discounted rates to that country. Or it could offer a tailored product which improves the quality of service and the speed of download to customers who frequently access YouTube on their smartphones.

Such an approach can yield quick and impressive results. Turkcell, for example, faced increasing challenges in customer retention, together with flattening subscription growth. In response, the company launched an initiative that allowed for innovative real-time view of the data from all its customers, giving it the ability to offer the right product to the right person at the right time. The marketing cycle was reduced to days rather than weeks, and gross revenue went up by approximately US\$ 15 million during the following year.

Similarly, Verizon identified a growth opportunity in the mid-size company market. The market had become highly competitive and very fragmented, leading to an inefficient sales outreach process. Verizon introduced analytics into its operations, discerning distinctive service needs and preferences. It tailored its offerings to customers accordingly, selecting the most appropriate communication channel for each. Two years later, Verizon's targeted campaigns generated 25 percent more revenue than generic equivalents, with the number of sales up by 250 percent compared to recent years.

Analytical Marketing requires a far-reaching transformation within various aspects of the marketing function, most notably data gathering, insight generation and customer interaction. These changes will involve the strengthening of key capabilities. Data management and product design are two examples of the areas that need to be improved. The marketing function must in general undergo a process of commercialization, reacting quickly to changing customer needs so that promising new ideas can be delivered to the market without delay.

Customers will respond positively to a change in strategy, as their needs become more accurately identified and serviced. For their part, telecom companies will have a natural advantage in the new era of Big Data, as they possess more customer knowledge than their counterparts in other industries. Nevertheless, many operators still have some catching up to do. Can they respond quickly enough?



GOOD NEWS FOR OPERATORS: INNOVA'S OFFERME IS THE NEW WAY TO KEEP YOUR SUBSCRIBERS ON YOUR SIDE



Alpaslan Tomuş
International Channels and
Alliances Group Manager
Innova IT Solutions

The telecommunications sector is one of the most competitive fields in the modern business world and, as a result, telecoms operators are moving away from traditional marketing campaigns towards more sophisticated and analytical loyalty systems. Loyalty programmes that we previously only saw in retail sector are now the focus of attention from telecoms operators.

As one of the leading technology firms in our region, we have developed a solution to give a competitive advantage to operators taking part in this fierce race. OfferMe is a next generation loyalty system that includes a multichannel campaign mechanism, can reach subscribers through mobile channels, and is able to offer location-based options. Its main objective is to raise subscriber satisfaction by increasing trust in the operator and grabbing the attention of non-subscribers by using irresistible advantages.

The system is designed to increase:

- Customer satisfaction
- Brand loyalty
- Sales of contracts
- Sales of devices
- Voice and data usage



How different is OfferMe?

OfferMe facilitates fully automated offer management and is a flexible loyalty system capable of analysing subscribers' past behaviour and offering them significant advantages based on their spending, location, and all other behaviours. The OfferMe system treats each subscriber as an individual and any application or campaign that might make them feel special can be designed using the platform.

The systems used by operator systems store many different types of transaction data. OfferMe uses this collection of big data to get to know subscribers properly and makes it possible to offer campaigns that are highly suited to their individual preferences.

Sample scenarios:

- OfferMe can send immediate, customised special offers to subscribers who are not satisfied with their service and have lodged a complaint with a call centre or dealer.
- If a subscriber who usually tops up credit once a month does not do so for 45 days, the system can send a "we miss you" message offering free additional minutes and text messages once they purchase more credit.
- Customers who are about to walk into an operator's store or contact centre can be offered special deals on their favourite phone.
- A subscriber who regularly buys additional Internet packages can be directed to the nearest store to start a new contract.
- The system can enable attractive quizzes and competitions offering surprise gifts.

Define your dream campaign

Thanks to its dynamic campaign interface, operators can establish their own campaigns completely freely. They can choose whatever action or control they see fit, within parameters of their own choosing, and the offers can also be set up with complete flexibility. In addition, OfferMe's social media integration means that there is no limit to interactions with subscribers.

"Subscribers who top up at least ones a month, 'like' the operator's page on Facebook, visit a contact centre, check-in on Foursquare and tweet the operator's name can choose between 750 free minutes to be used within the next two months or 10% off cinema tickets."

Location-based applications with Bluetooth 4.0

OfferMe uses Bluetooth 4.0 (Bluetooth Low Energy) to enable position-based campaigns and the ability to recognise customers when they enter a store. The BLE technology allows active location tracking within 50 meters. In this way operators become instantly aware when a subscriber is close by (perhaps in or near a store, stand, contact centre, etc.) and can send him or her a completely customised offer.

Cloud-based service option

We also present OfferMe as a cloud-based solution that eliminates the need to invest in new infrastructure. Our reliable cloud-based solution protects user data with industry standard encryption methods and can be easily used by operators wishing to design their own campaigns, customise their reward system and determine strategies for specific subscriber groups.

About Innova

The Turk Telekom Group is the biggest group of companies in Turkey and includes Turkey's leading communications and technology companies. Innova is part of the Turk Telekom Group and is known as a leader in R&D and innovation. Innova is one of the leading companies in the telecoms sector and closely follows developments within it to create sector-specific solutions.



TELSTRA REAFFIRMS COMMITMENT TO CUSTOMERS, GAINS SUBSCRIBERS



Peter Jamieson
Executive Director of Advocacy
Telstra



Telstra is a company with a longstanding commitment to technology and product leadership. It is currently in the midst of one of the most important transitions in its history—to put the customer at the center of its business. In recent years, Telstra’s focus on industry leadership is evident in its substantial investment of billions of dollars into one of the world’s fastest 4G mobile networks, as well as building a portfolio of new businesses and initiatives to improve capabilities in Australia and across Asia.

Its biggest transition, however, is to become more customer focused. Many companies give customer centricity lip service, but Telstra put its money where its mouth is, and has millions of new subscribers to show for it.

In its 2013 annual report, CEO David Thodey wrote, “we need to keep improving and going from strength to strength in everything we do. And that strength will come from how we serve our customers.” So far its plan is paying off. Telstra’s Australian retail mobile customer base jumped from 12.2 million in 2011 to 15.1 million in 2013.

Peter Jamieson, a 25-year veteran of Telstra, has seen many of the company’s ups and downs. He now serves as executive director of advocacy, overseeing the implementation and management of advocacy programs across Telstra. He recently spoke to Customer Strategist about how the operator is turning customer-focused talk into action.

Why differentiate on customer experience?

Our history is one that has focused on products, engineering, and networks. We built a strong network on a tough

continent. But products can only take you so far. We want to build off our legacy to be absolutely focused on putting customers at the center of everything we do. We want every Australian to become an advocate of the organization and talk differently [than they have in the past] about Telstra.

As a long-time employee, I've seen our attention to customers evolve. The passion for the customer has not always been at the surface, but it's been there. CEO [David Thodey] has made service improvement a priority, which has awakened a renewed sense of passion among employees.

The market is changing, and competitors are changing as well. More operators now share the same network infrastructure, so traditional network differentiation goes away. Customer service makes sense as a differentiator. An advocate will spend more, stay longer, and cost less over his or her lifetime. We are evolving to create advocates of all our stakeholders: customers, shareholders, suppliers, etc.

Discussions about creating customer trust and delivering a frictionless customer experience have really resonated with me. It's what we're ultimately striving for at Telstra.

What are some examples of the customer experience initiatives you've put in place?

We started with the fundamental things. We moved to a 24/7 service model, instituted weekend field service and installations, and launched online self-service for simple transactions. The bigger issue was culture change. We want to help our employees feel as though they can do what's best for customers. Every single employee can help impact the customer experience.

We created a mobile app for employees called SNAPP App, where any employee can tap into the service organization to help resolve issues on the fly. It's designed for people who are away from work—at a barbecue or talking to friends and family—to be able to log a claim, send messages to relevant service groups, or escalate an issue to help resolve it. For example, one employee's sister-in-law moved to a new place and complained that her initial connection appointment was delayed. The employee logged into the system, and moved up the service appointment by four days. It also provides up-to-date information about the business, strategy, purpose, and other topical issues that may come up in conversation. So far, more than 19,000 employees have downloaded the app.

Internally, all employees are encouraged to meet for monthly "customer T-Time" meetings to discuss ways in which the business can improve customer service. More than 3,500 such meetings occur each month. Also, 8,000 supervisors and leaders have gone through customercentric workshops, and the company has trained more than 3,000 customer service employees.

I'm proud that we can help people do the sorts of jobs they want to do, and be proud themselves to work for Telstra. If we allow people to serve customers well, they will.

You've also transformed your contact center operations. Can you describe some of those changes?

We were not delivering the best possible outcomes for our customers. Residual issues caused dissatisfaction and

callbacks. Our teams were fragmented, causing a poor, inconsistent experience. The new strategy consolidated initiatives and locations to align around the customer. We fundamentally changed the way we worked. Now, we route calls to the most relevant agent, we discourage transfers, and we have broadened agent training so they can resolve more issues. There are no restrictions on call times, and first call resolution is a leading KPI. What we're doing in the contact center is representative of what we're trying to do in the whole company.

"We created a mobile app where any employee can tap into the service organization to help resolve issues on the fly."

What other metrics have you changed?

It was necessary to change the metrics to help align the organization. All metrics take a much harder look at the customer impact. The customer perspective gets measured, instead of being internally focused. Customer wait times in retail stores are a particular pain point, so we now measure in-store transactions along with customer wait times. First call resolution is measured. When measuring technician performance, we look at the number of jobs, but also how many were completed to the customer's satisfaction. Also, we evolved our customer satisfaction metrics to now include Net Promoter Score, which has become pervasive across the organization. Last year we conducted 11 million NPS customer surveys to collect dynamic feedback from customers.

What challenges have you come across during Telstra's customer transformation?

One of the biggest challenges has been connecting the end-to-end customer experience, so customers feel that they can trust we'll do what we promise we'll do. We want to make it as frictionless as possible, so that it's not up to the customer to figure out how to maneuver through the organization to resolve issues. That takes commitment and alignment from the entire company. Maintaining momentum, enthusiasm, and focus can sometimes be a challenge as well. It's easy to get bogged down by day-to-day activities and lose sight of the overall customer vision. The monthly meetings and customerbased metrics help to keep focused.

Telstra's transformation led to customer growth of more than 1 million customers' services, while competitors grew much more slowly or even declined. What about the program are you most proud of?

I'm most proud of the fact that we started a journey that's changing the way people talk about Telstra. We're staying the course, and truly embedding customer advocacy in our DNA. It's a great journey with a lot of challenges, but it's worthwhile.



I MIGHT AS WELL BE TALKING TO THE WALL: REGULATORY MUSINGS ON THE INTERNET OF THINGS AND M2M SERVICES



Eamon Holley
Legal Director
DLA Piper



As a teenager I often heard my mother exclaim to me that she "...may as well be talking to the wall". Little did we know at the time how much her vain pleas for my attention had in common with Steve Job's vision of a time when she could actually talk to the wall and expect a reaction. Apple's recent launch of its "Home Kit" product will, through Apple's iPad, iPhones and Siri, enable my mother to talk to her light switches, open and lock the house and communicate with the toaster.

This is great. It is a realization of what many people reading this article will already know of as the nascent Internet of Things ("IOT"), or Machine to Machine ("M2M") services. Almost without us noticing, it seems that an Internet of Things has emerged, and its pace of growth will not slow anytime soon. Cisco has calculated that there were about 12.5 billion connected devices in 2010. By 2020 it anticipates 50 billion connected devices.

However, partly as a result of the recent high-profile investigations into monitoring of personal communications by both security organizations and hackers, although people are embracing the convenience that constant connectivity brings there is an accompanying hesitation and distrust about just how much this new environment will know about us, and who will know about it. But more on that shortly. On a more mundane level there are a number of regulatory issues for providers of IoT and M2M services to consider. For instance, most commercial M2M services currently utilize existing mobile technology and networks, and rely upon

SIMs which might roam between countries and networks; examples include the Kindle, some Automated Vehicle Location systems, fleet management tools and inventory tracking tools. If a SIM is “permanently roaming” in a jurisdiction and the provider of the M2M service is receiving a fee for that service, is it operating a telecommunications service? Does it need a telecommunications license from the local regulatory body?

But a telecommunications licensing requirement is just one of the issues that M2M service providers need to be alive to. Probably more relevantly given the cross border nature of such services, information will be transferred, processed and stored across a number of jurisdictions. As the Internet of Things becomes more prevalent this information is likely to become more personal in its nature. There is, therefore, a real requirement for IOT and M2M service providers to consider the data protection and privacy laws applicable of the countries in which they are operating.

Other issues that IOT and M2M service providers using SIMs should consider include:

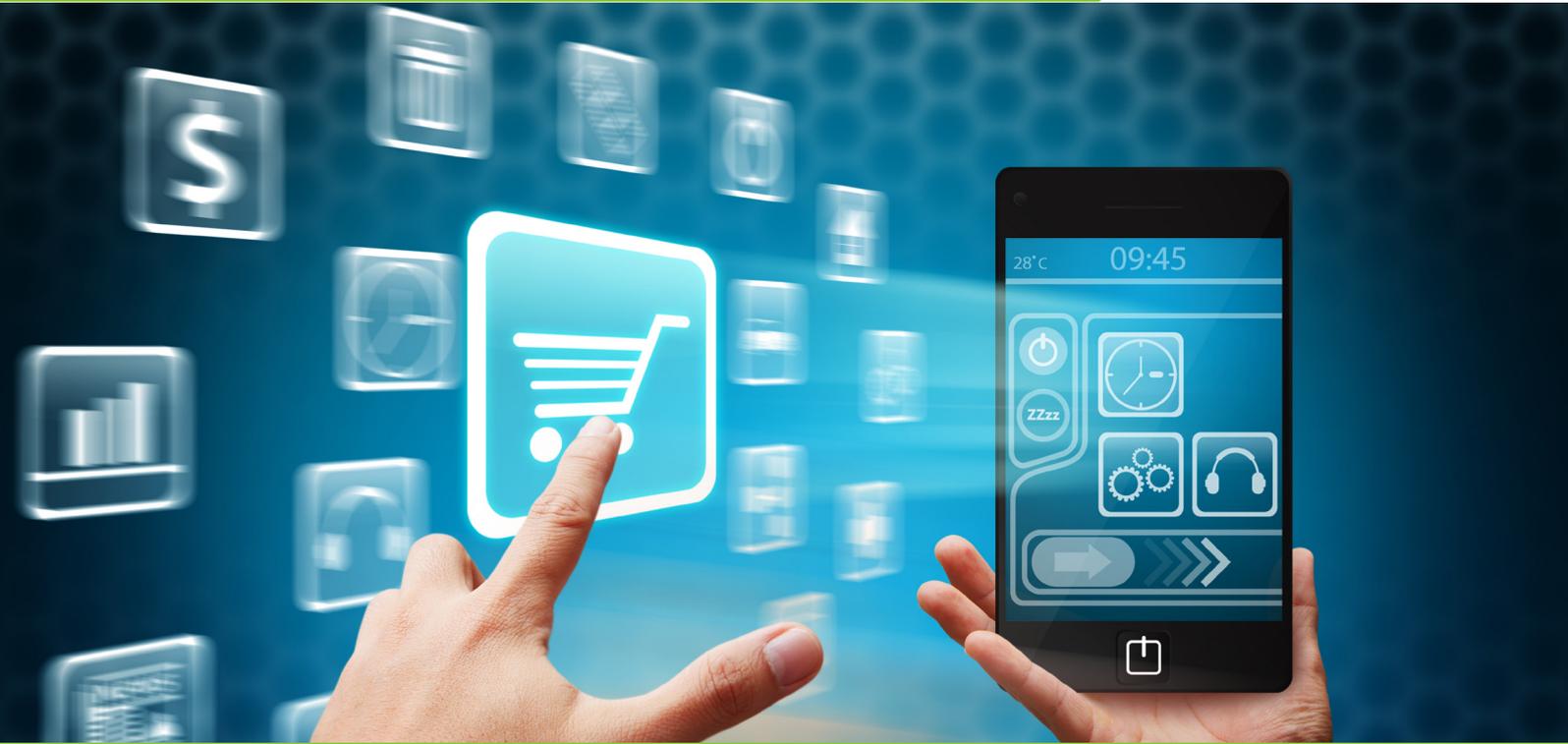
1. Are there issues with importation of sims or sim embedded equipment?
2. Are there specific rules regarding numbering policies?
3. Are there any restrictions on limited voice capabilities from the machine (for example, making an emergency call from a car)?
4. Are there restrictions on where a service provider can locate its network operations center?

Our clients find that navigating these issues in the SAMENA region is complex, due to the many divergent telecommunications regulatory and data protection regimes and their various stages of development. However a number of regulatory regimes appear to be starting to tackle some of these issues, with both Saudi Arabia’s CITC and Oman’s TRA issuing frameworks for automated vehicle location services.

The Internet of Things, and the issues it raises, is not going away. Telco operators, M2M service providers and their advisors will continue to keep an eye on how governments and regulators address these issues. In order for governments and regulators fully capture the benefits of an internet of things it will be increasingly important that they:

- Establish clear and flexible guidelines that M2M service providers can follow;
- Introduce data protection regimes that engender the trust of users of these and other information and communications services;
- At the same time, transparently address their very real national security concerns.

This will be a very delicate balance, but it is an exercise worth grappling with now. For telecommunications operators, the benefits of establishing such a regime are also tangible and should be encouraged. Facing declining revenues in traditional “human” markets, with a further 40 odd billion devices connecting in the next 6 years or so, telco operators will find that their next big revenue generator will not be from providing services to humans, but to their machines, walls and toasters.



A PROSPEROUS FUTURE: PUBLIC SECTOR IN THE UAE EMBRACES SMART TECHNOLOGIES



Fahad Al Hassawi
Chief Commercial Officer
du



The public sector in the UAE has been quick to adopt smart technologies and has started to embrace the transformation that a more flexible approach to working practices can bring to organizations. Notably, it's one way to overcome some of the deep-rooted cultural factors such as data security concerns and legacy systems and processes, which have traditionally inhibited the ability to break free from conventional, nine-to-five deskbound duties.

Progress in technology represents a significant opportunity to introduce a new shape of public service delivery, one that reflects the changing ways in which employees communicate, for example via social networks. Programmes that introduce convergence between voice and data and a move to common ICT infrastructure, such as the Public Services Network (PSN), will greatly enhance the drivers for pursuing a public service flexible working programme.

Telcos play an important role in this transformation. They can provide identity, subscriber preferences (opt in location preferences) and payment as APIs which can be opened for government sectors to use it even jointly encourage private sector and public to make their own smart applications.

UAE government showing the flexible way forward

The UAE's is ambitious to lead in Smart Government services and there are already many examples in the public sector which demonstrate how quickly progress is being made to digitise services in the public sector. Many e-services

have already been made available and downloadable on computers, laptops, tablets, smart phones and other devices. And many more are on the way. For example, in order to cut paperwork, the Abu Dhabi court is developing a new online filing system to simplify and speed the application process.

These are signs of real innovation in a sector which has a history of siloed working, with legacy systems across agencies, boundaries, and jurisdictions that do not “talk” to each other. By removing these silos and barriers to collaborative working, it becomes easier to restructure and relocate departments and people. This, in turn, supports further rationalization of the government estate, and facilitates mobility within the office, hot-desking, and flexible work patterns. However, whether shared ICT services support frontline services or back-office services such as finance, HR, and procurement, successful sharing depends largely on a willingness to standardize business processes.

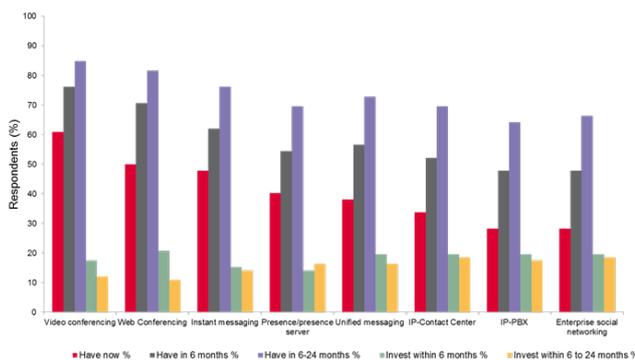
The majority of the private sector is already moving into the third wave of shared services, but the public sector has been traditionally slow to see successful uptake. It is very difficult to transition to shared services and the return on investment takes time to realize. Nonetheless, when done effectively, shared services remain an attractive and valid

communications services and applications, while leveraging existing infrastructure to control costs and ensure a high ROI. The beauty of a converged IP-based infrastructure managed by du is the way it provides an end-to-end network of multiple virtual LANs designed to run any mix of data, voice and video communications at high performance levels. It is a perfect solution for businesses that need to find additional capacity out of their existing network links to support new systems and business applications. By offering converged services over IP, you get a ‘future proof’ service that bridges new and existing infrastructure, which is both reliable and cost-effective. Today, telcos offer a full suite of services from managed voice and video, managed international connectivity such as Ethernet and IPVPN, to managed web security including remote security event and vulnerability management services. Plus there is a full range of government worker mobility and machine-to-machine solutions, to keep the wheels of government moving smoothly.

Taking strides towards shared services

However, the public sector is making progress in implementing shared and converged networks. Historical barriers to shared services are being rapidly overcome, as the need to eliminate the duplication of resources and

VOICE/DATA CONVERGENCE TECHNOLOGIES THAT ENTERPRISES CURRENTLY HAVE OR PLAN TO INVEST IN (SOURCE: OVUM'S GLOBAL BUSINESS TRENDS SURVEY)



option for agencies looking to focus on core capabilities and eliminate the duplication of effort. The benefits of shared services include:

- Reducing the cost of back-office corporate services via sharing of assets and minimizing process costs
- Driving service excellence by freeing the department to focus on core objectives and professionalizing corporate service functions
- Increasing operational efficiency through better management information and improved benchmarking, comparable between organizations, which could, in turn, potentially improve performance
- Reducing costs and improving service by delivering standardized services both within agencies and across agencies, particularly the latter.

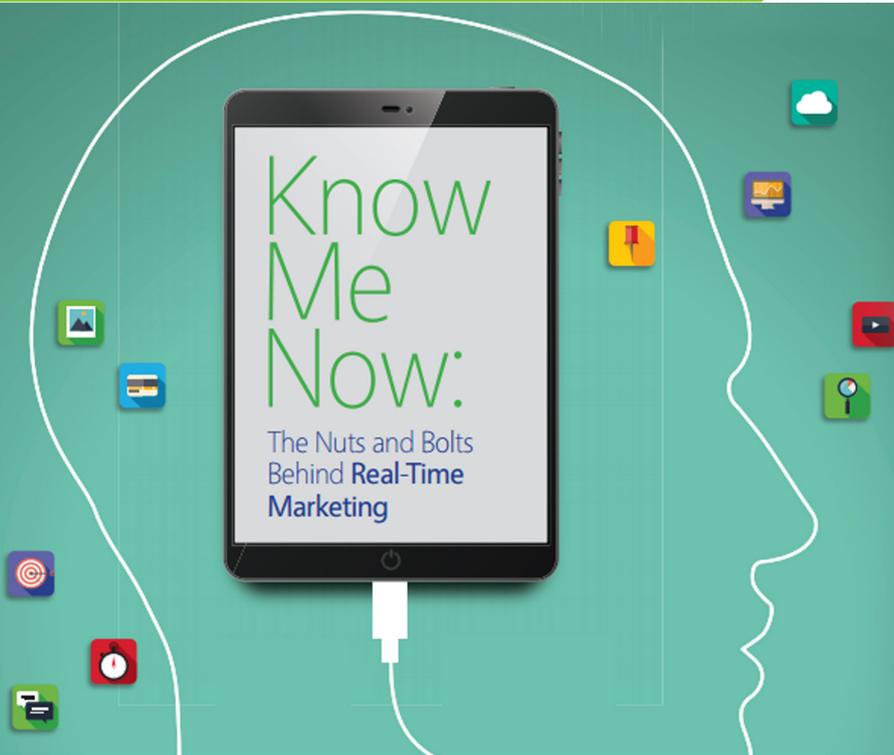
The figure below highlights the voice and data convergence technologies that feature in private sector investment plans in the next 6-12 months. Progressive IT executives need find new ways of managing the growing array of

aggregate infrastructure as well as skills and service delivery becomes of paramount importance. The sprawling footprint of the government machine can no longer be maintained, and with this comes the need to rethink the way services are delivered. The idea of greater collaboration among service providers is being driven into the heart of the sector. Developments in technology are creating more options and making it possible to work in different, more efficient, focussing on supporting the employee beyond the confines of the traditional workplace and providing common ICT access for all public servants

This can be achieved by adherence to industry-defined common and open standards, which seeks to reduce the number of procurement frameworks and the cost of procuring; drive adoption of next-generation network and next-generation broadband access and services; improve workforce mobility; and move toward unified communications.

Aside from the immediate savings that the elimination of duplication of networks will bring, the PSN will promote and facilitate a “joined-up” approach to working, as the barriers previously preventing it are removed. Having multiple public agencies on the same network, serving all staff at the required security level, will bring them one step closer to collaboration.

The key to success in flexible working is in understanding where technology fits, and appreciating that while it is fundamental to truly flexible working, it should only ever be an enabler. While technology enables greater flexibility in working practices and the creation of a more agile organization, being able to achieve these outcomes is largely down to fully understanding the business case.



KNOW ME NOW: THE NUTS AND BOLTS BEHIND REAL-TIME MARKETING



Ashwin Cariappa
Consultant
Peppers & Rogers Group



Gokhan Guney
Senior Manager
Peppers & Rogers Group



Adham Fahmi
Principal
Peppers & Rogers Group

T-Mobile made a splash this year in the U.S. with its campaign to pay customers' early termination fees if they switch to the hot pink operator. AT&T, meanwhile, is offering T-Mobile customers up to \$450 to switch. And Sprint created a new friends and family "Framily" plan to entice people to sign up as a group for increased savings. And, that's just in the U.S. Operators around the world are trying to stay ahead of the competition with new acquisition strategies that steal customers from one another. Many of these programs focus on short-term, price-based promotions that may ultimately undercut profitability.

Acquisition is important, but not the only thing. Retention is critical to the long-term health of any company, particularly in the competitive telecom space. That's why programs

such as real-time marketing can be a boon to companies looking to build relationship strength with the customers they already have.

Real-time marketing is defined as the combination of behavioral analytics and automated marketing to provide customers with the right offer at the right time based on specific customer behaviors. Using what you know about an individual customer or segment, you can sense and respond in the moment to serve their needs. We at Peppers & Rogers Group believe that companies that harness the potential of real-time marketing will reap significant benefits through improved response rates, Net Promoter Scores and return on investment.

For example, European airline KLM recently conducted an experiment called KLM Surprise to strengthen its emotional bond with customers. Flight attendants monitored social media to identify customers who mentioned they were planning a trip with the carrier. Using information provided online by the customers, the company purchased personalized gifts that were presented to customers upon their arrival at the airport. In one instance, a passenger received an iTunes gift card after tweeting about his excitement to use his new iPad on his KLM flight. Despite

Figure 1: Use cases for real-time marketing in telecom

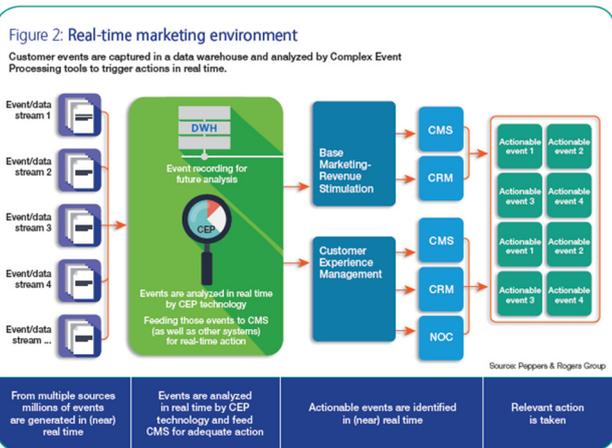
Real-time marketing can improve customer relationship strength at multiple points of the customer lifecycle.

Source: Peppers & Rogers Group



only 40 passengers being given gifts, word-of-mouth and social mentions resulted in KLM's Twitter page being viewed more than 1 million times in November 2013 alone.

KLM is an interesting example, but only one of few companies that are beginning to unlock the potential of real-time marketing as a competitive differentiator. It can be complex to implement the structured and systematic realtime marketing strategies, technologies, and processes needed to enable an immediate, direct connection with individual consumers.



In the telecommunications industry, real-time marketing remains a fairly new concept. With highly saturated markets, the challenge for operators is to create value year-over-year from their product portfolio and customer base. Through accurately targeting customers with highly customized offers, operators can generate value for customers while minimizing existing revenue cannibalization. This approach also enables operators to measure performance on a more granular level than is possible through mass marketing activities.

As seen in Figure 1, advanced marketing techniques can be used to enhance the operator-consumer relationship throughout the customer's entire lifecycle.

Customer interactions can begin in the acquisition phase, followed by pre-determined communications during the

first 90 days of the customer's tenure, during which time studies have shown customers have the highest propensity to purchase additional products from the operator.

But perhaps the most advanced and exciting uses of real-time marketing are to maximize the value of existing customers. A simple practical example is the uplifting of customer recharge behavior. Under regular circumstances, a customer may recharge his pre-paid line and increase usage immediately after the recharge. As he gets close to his pre-paid limit, he will slow down usage. With an effective real-time marketing solution in place, operators can identify when the customer enters this low usage period and push an appropriately timed recharge offer to him. This will likely result in the customer recharging his line and using it freely again, thus boosting revenue for the operator.

What's behind the curtain?

Real-time marketing requires a complex and agile system to proactively respond to individual events, complex combination of events, and changes to the business environment. In telecommunications, these events can be system- or customer-generated (e.g., dropped calls, out of credit, high churn risk score, etc.). The changes can be automatically captured and acted upon based on specific business rules and processes, or may require human intervention after being flagged. It should be designed to continuously evolve and adapt, operating as a re-iterative, test-and-learn operating model to ensure the impact of the triggering events provides important lessons for future decisions.

Its implementation involves integrating multiple systems; some of which operators may be introducing for the first time. The solution architecture is of paramount importance to ensure the business can benefit from continuous scalability as well as performance (see Figure 2).

From a marketing perspective this system should enhance the operational responsiveness to real-time events, for both everyday marketing activities or enhanced customer experience management. Defining triggers and rules for actions will rely on both real-time and historical data to enhance the action or decision deployed. As such, the system needs multiple information sources as inputs. They may include:

- Network and location data
- Customer behavior, profile, and subscription data
- Campaign response data
- Social media
- Voice of Customer: speech analytics, surveys, complaints, etc.

Each company can define its own specific events (realtime and historical) to be captured and feed the relevant systems for processing and triggering actions. Common systems used include complex event processing (CEP), campaign management (CMS), network operations centers (NOC), and customer relationship management (CRM). Events related to customer experience management may involve multiple systems. For example, dropped calls captured for a high-value customer may trigger a campaign and additional priority events. This requires full interoperability among the different platforms.

With the requisite enablers in place, operators will be fully equipped to perform the tasks at each stage of the real-time marketing lifecycle (see Figure 3).

1. Sense: Define scenarios or use cases for real-time events and customer behavioral patterns to be recognized by the system, then incorporate one or more elements into each scenario. They may include:

- Telecommunications usage
- Revenue and billing
- Recharge
- Devices
- Network
- Social media
- Customer service interactions
- Loyalty transactions

2. Qualify: Explore customer data to identify instances of pre-defined use cases and scenarios defined in Stage 1 on a real-time basis. Optimize action thresholds to be used to respond to actions by maximizing the value provided to the customer and minimizing revenue cannibalization risk.

3. Respond: Trigger specific action based on patterns of activity detected during the Sense and Qualify stages. Decide the best way to target them at the right time and through the right channel. Responses should be designed to stimulate revenue generated by customers, retain customers, generate customer loyalty, and improve the customer experience.

4. Measure: Leverage test-and-learn methodology to adapt use cases and scenarios through analyzing the impact of real-time marketing actions on revenue, profitability, and customer satisfaction. Incorporate the feedback loop back to Stage 1 to review action thresholds and optimize them to maximize impact of activities.

Four barriers to real-time marketing success Peppers & Rogers Group conducted market research to identify the main pain points faced by telecommunications operators attempting to convert the plethora of data available to them into actionable insights resulting in value creation. Four distinct categories of challenges emerged: data environment, internal capabilities, visibility, and culture and coordination.

Within the data environment, it's common to see data from multiple sources found in silos, resulting in a fragmented and incomplete view of customer behavior. In addition, operators must ensure their data is stored in a manner that supports easy retrieval, manipulation, and analysis. Quality and usability issues are also extremely common, typically concerning the completeness, consistency, and accuracy of data held in operator systems.

What to do: Define an effective data strategy to transform the plethora of data available into actionable information. It is vital to couple, effective data quality management with the creation of clearly defined data-marts that integrate siloed data. Systems must speak to each other in real time or near real time so operators can act at the right moment.

Many operators have not yet developed their internal analytical capabilities to a level to properly optimize

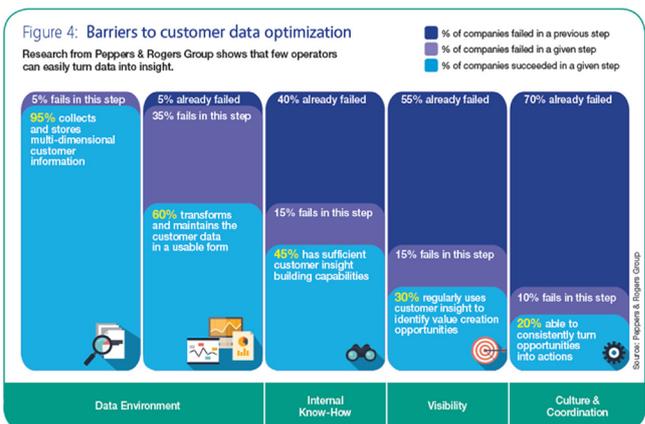
marketing activities. Even simple insight generation is missing at a number of telecommunications operators. Many struggle with effective systematic reporting and generating insights from their data. Organizations must be capable of leveraging customer insights to drive their daily marketing activities. What to do: Turn data into insights. Companies can analyze real-time data to determine the correct threshold or trigger to launch a marketing campaign or other communication.

When it comes to visibility of real-time marketing insights, many operators are unable to answer the most important question of "So what?" Identifying potential value creation opportunities provides a challenge due to the lack of effective technology and analytical capabilities. What to do: Operators can identify the optimal channel and response for each customer action with a test-and-learn approach. The end goal will be a library of responses with defined channels for each real-time marketing trigger.

And finally, a major stumbling block is culture change. Companies are often unable to understand the value of real-time marketing, believing mass marketing initiatives generate sufficient value. A second cultural difficulty lies in internal motivation. In order to generate additional value, additional effort is required from internal resources. And as with any cross-functional initiative, coordination among multiple departments can get complicated. What to do: Key stakeholders must be engaged at an early stage of the journey in order to achieve organizational buy-in. A clear



Figure 3:



cooperation. Also, any programs should include a workflow management component to break down barriers among departments.

Conclusion

With so much data being collected and analyzed these days, consumers will come to expect real-time interaction from all companies they do business with, especially telecoms. Leading operators understand this and will put the strategies, technologies, and operations in place to enable real-time marketing activities to help meet those changing expectations.



Global Symposium for Regulators (GSR 14)

2-5 June, 2014



SAMENA Council Recommends Fresh Perspective on Data Delivery and Protection at ITU's Global Symposium for Regulators 2014

Dubai, UAE, June 6, 2014: SAMENA Telecommunications Council was a key participant at the Global Symposium for Regulators (GSR) 2014 held recently in Bahrain under the patronage of His Royal Highness Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al-Khalifa, Prime Minister of Bahrain. The 14th edition of the GSR was organized by the International Telecom Union (ITU) in line with the theme **"Capitalizing on the potential of the digital world."**

The GSR is a unique ITU forum which brings together heads of national telecom and ICT regulatory authorities from around the world and serves as the global annual venue for regulators to discuss the most pressing issues they have identified. At the forum, the South Asia – Middle East – North Africa (SAMENA) region was represented by SAMENA Telecommunications Council's Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Bocar Ba, who was a member of the panelists in the opening day debate session titled **"Redefining responsibilities in a data driven digital world."**

In many countries in the SAMENA region, regulation has not, so far, kept pace with the rapidly changing technical arena.



Commenting on whether regulatory frameworks are evolving in synch and on a timely basis with the evolution in network technology and data handling and storage techniques, Mr. Bocar said, "In many countries in the SAMENA region, regulation has not, so far, kept pace with the rapidly changing technical arena. For instance, a number of telecom regulators are opposed to cloud computing as well as the introduction of services such as M2M simply because it means that data will flow in and out of the particular country under the regulator's jurisdiction. There are legitimate concerns about consumer privacy and this certainly needs to be addressed but it is unrealistic to stick to regulation that was designed to address legacy systems and processes."

"In addition, when one looks beyond the telecom world, at IT companies for instance – they are using cloud computing without any of the same restrictions imposed by telecom regulators. Therefore, from a telecom regulatory standpoint, the area of data delivery and protection needs to be looked at from a fresh perspective," he added.

Speaking about the principal challenges faced by operators in the digital world, Mr. Bocar highlighted: "There is a significant shift in revenue sources driven by the expansion of the Internet, especially mobile applications. In addition, there is an increase in customer network service expectations that require national broadband infrastructure building, which is a costly proposition. Next, there is a major change in users and patterns of digital services and products, which we at SAMENA Council call Digitization."

Throughout the GSR 2014, which was hosted from June 3 – June 5, 2014, participants including regulators, policy makers and ITU-D sector members analyzed and discussed several means to bring the full potential of the digital world to the consumers in an informed, responsive and safe manner.



The SAMENA Telecommunication Council also participated in the pre-event meeting of Private Sector CRO (Chief Regulatory Officers) held on June 2,, where it stated the importance of bringing in investors and private equity funds to the discussion, along with policy makers and regulators, in order to ensure the adoption and development of investment friendly policies and regulations.





Global Multistakeholder Meeting
on the Future of Internet Governance

NETmundial

SAMENA Council Recommends Key Principles for Global Internet Governance at the NETMundial Conference in Brazil

Global Multistakeholder meeting on the future of Internet Governance to focus on crafting key fundamental principles and proposing a roadmap for its further evolution

In line with its continuing efforts to contribute towards improving and advancing a global Internet Governance model based on a multi-stakeholder approach, the SAMENA Council shared its recommendations to the NETMundial conference, Sao Paulo, Brazil, from April 23 to April 24, 2014, in terms of five key principles to navigate the path of global Internet Governance as the Internet celebrates 25 years of existence this year.

The conference is organized by the Brazilian Internet Steering Committee (CGI.br) and /1Net, a forum that gathers international entities of the various stakeholders involved with Internet governance. The NETMundial conference provides an excellent platform to initiate discussions on crafting Internet governance principles as well as proposing a roadmap for the further evolution of the Internet governance ecosystem. The meeting aims to promote healthy discussions based on inputs by civil society, private sector, academia and technical community from around the globe to establish strategic guidelines related to the use and development of the global Internet. The focus of the conference is to be on two major themes: 'Internet Governance Principles' and 'Roadmap for the Further Evolution of the Internet Governance Ecosystem'.

According to Bocar A. BA, CEO, SAMENA Telecommunications Council, "We are looking forward to using our regional expertise to provide our inputs at the NETMundial conference by contributing a set of principles which take into account the safety, security and sustainability of the Internet while maintaining its decentralized structure. This is important as a global consensus on Internet Governance

Principles is integral to retaining user trust and confidence and sustaining the healthy growth of the Internet."

SAMENA Council's recommendations revolve around five principles, including the involvement of all stakeholders on equal grounds to advance successful liberalized policies and focus on maintaining consistent pro-competitive commercial regulatory regimes, the establishment of transparent, participatory and readily available governance principles based on accountability and responsibility, the recognition of the Internet as a divergent ecosystem with social and economic benefits worldwide, the engagement of all members and key stakeholders in addressing safety, security and privacy issues in order to safeguard the internet's wellbeing, volatility and interoperability and the protection of online user rights based on fundamental human rights through the same rule of law to promote efficiency and innovation.

"Moving forward, we believe that discussions like those to be held at NETMundial meeting, play a pivotal role in fostering the solid conservation and healthy development of an open internet. To achieve the results we want, we recommend defining the roles and responsibilities of all the participating stakeholders in the governance process. Also, we are of the belief that the private sector can assume a more active role in setting standards, developing technical protocols and providing further support on other Internet-related issues. In totality, SAMENA Council affirms that it is vital to consider and analyze all decision-making processes, with a multistakeholder approach, to achieve higher levels of growth in the industry" he concluded.



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