



Telecoms Briefing

Produced by Early Morning Media

A round-up of the key press news and comment relating to the telecommunications industry

Tuesday, 15th January 2019

THE HOT STORY

5G benefits ‘yet to be communicated’ to consumers

A survey by the Global System of Mobile Telecommunications Association Intelligence (GSMAi) has revealed that the majority of global consumers are not fully aware of the overall benefits of 5G technology. Some 15,000 mobile users in 16 markets were asked to define their 5G expectations, with over half (54%) focusing on improved mobile data speeds and 41% predicting improved service coverage. Just 25% named new services as an expected benefit, with only 20% citing new devices. Almost 25% were unable to name any benefits that 5G is expected to bring. GSMAi noted in a report accompanying the results: “It will come as a disappointment, though perhaps not a surprise, to operators that innovative new services only resonate with 25% of respondents in our survey. Consumers currently see 5G as the logical continuation of previous generation.” Peter Jarich, Head of GSMA Intelligence, remarked: “While smartphones remain the dominant consumer technology, device vendors and operators are looking to 5G to unlock a new chapter in the smartphone growth story, even though our research suggests there is still work to do to convince consumers of the benefits of the move to 5G.” Meanwhile, Head of Spectrum, GSMA, Brett Tarnutzer, noted: “Operators urgently need more spectrum to deliver the endless array of services that 5G will enable – our 5G future depends heavily on the decisions governments are making in 2019.”

[Mobile Live World](#) [SDxCentral](#)

INFRASTRUCTURE

Verizon’s Vestberg makes keynote speech at CES

Verizon CEO Hans Vestberg discussed the network’s plans for 5G this year at the Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in Las Vegas. Noting next-generation 5G wireless technology’s potential to transform various industries, Mr Vestberg then analysed what he described as the eight currencies of 5G, that is elements of the technology that will be fundamental, valuable and game-changing. Some of these include higher peak data rates and cumulative volumes of mobile data in a given area, low end-to-end latency, and high data reliability. New York Times Company CEO Mark Thompson said the newspaper will launch a new 5G journalism centre in New York City, with early access to Verizon 5G technology and equipment, while Walt Disney Studios CTO Jamie Voris said his company will be working with Verizon to provide early access to 5G innovations to firms such as Marvel, Pixar, Disney,

and LucasArts. Skyward head Mariah Scott also announced that Verizon is committing to becoming the first carrier to have a million 5G-connected drones. Mr Vestberg also announced a \$1m fund called the 'Built on 5G Challenge', which offers money to firms that can come up with usable, transformative ways to integrate 5G technology.

[Venture Beat](#)

Cable industry's '10G' campaign announced

An announcement has been made at the 2019 Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in Las Vegas, by the NCTA and cable groups Comcast, Charter, Cox and Mediacom, of their new '10G' initiative. The name refers to the 10-gigabit per second network the groups are hoping to achieve, with most internet users today operating at speeds of no more than 1 gigabit per second. The FCC's 2018 broadband report claimed that the median download speed for US broadband customers was in fact only 72 Mbps as of September 2017, rather than 1Gbps. Michael Powell, the president and CEO of NCTA and former FCC chairman told *USA Today* that: "The naming convention to me is a bit of a sideshow," going on to say that 5G and broadband "... really work in tandem with each other to deliver consumer experiences." An article on *The Verge* concludes that the 10G campaign is unlikely to succeed.

[The Verge](#) [5G](#) [USA Today](#)

Net neutrality supporters face challenges

After Democrats in the US failed to invalidate the 'Restoring Internet Freedom' order, Federal Communications Commission Chairman Ajit Pai has released a statement noting: "I'm pleased that a strong bipartisan majority of the US House of Representatives declined to reinstate heavy-handed Internet regulation". He went on: "In short, the FCC's light-touch approach is working. In 2019, we'll continue to pursue our forward-looking agenda to bring digital opportunity to all Americans." Net neutrality rules face legal and regulatory challenges, with courts to be asked to rule on whether individual States can enforce their own localised legislation on the issue. *Telecoms.com* notes that the longer the issue takes to be resolved, the less the general public will be interested in seeing a just outcome.

[Telecoms](#) [Capacity Media](#)

Infrastructure concerns placed ahead of Brexit

A survey by the Somerset Chamber of Commerce (SCC) of 92 businesses in the county has revealed that local companies are more concerned about education- and skills- related issues and digital infrastructure than they are about Britain's impending departure from the EU. According to respondents, influencing the Somerset skills agenda (62%) and lobbying for improved digital infrastructure (56%) should be their top priorities for this year. Stephen Henagulph, CEO of the SCC, commented: "Whilst there is considerable debate around Brexit, the results of the Somerset Chamber membership survey show that the skills shortages and broadband issues faced by the county's businesses continue to be a significant concern."

[ISP Review](#)

INDUSTRY

High hopes for 2019 in telecoms

The latest *Telecoms.com* Annual Industry Survey has revealed that some 75% of respondents feel positive about the coming year in the industry. The fast rollout of 5G is expected to revolutionise the telecoms landscape, though 62% of survey respondents believe the network's benefits have not yet been properly communicated to consumers. Martin Morgan, VP Marketing, Openet, commented: "The survey provided an industry viewpoint on how much revenue operators will generate from services enabled by digital transformation. This is the foundation for why transformation is needed in the first place." He went on: "The survey also provided a health check on how far the industry is advanced in its digital transformation journey and how far it needs to progress to be able to meet their digital

services revenue goals.” Meanwhile, almost three-quarters (74%) of firms responding to the survey said they and their customers have experienced an increase in cyberattacks in 2018.

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SECURITY

Norway mulls Huawei ban

Norwegian justice minister Tor Mikkel Wara has said the country is considering whether to exclude China's Huawei Technologies from building part of its new 5G telecommunications infrastructure, as other Western nations have done. Mr Wara commented: "We share the same concerns as the United States and Britain and that is espionage on private and state actors in Norway". Sigve Brekke, CEO of Norwegian telecommunications firm Telenor, told Reuters that "Norway has had full control over critical infrastructure for many, many years and we in Telenor take it very seriously".

[Economic Times](#) [South China Morning Post](#)

DEVICES

CES sees 5G devices take centre stage

Devices with 5G connectivity are taking centre stage at the 2019 CES in Las Vegas, with Qualcomm's new Snapdragon 855 mobile platform and X50 5G cellular modem to power more than 30 5G devices this year. Meanwhile, Intel's Project Athena aims to introduce a new breed of advanced laptop computers with 5G connectivity and AI capabilities, with the firm working on a plan to enable PC makers including Microsoft, Google, Lenovo, Dell, and Samsung to bring Project Athena machines to market in the second half of 2019. Samsung has also premiered its 5G smartphone prototype at the event, while Telstra announced that it has entered into agreements to offer commercial 5G smartphones on its mobile network. CEO Andy Penn remarked: "From here on the timing on the rollout of 5G is dependent on the availability of the devices - handsets, tablets, and into the whole world of the Internet of Things".

[Business Insider](#) [Business Insider](#) [ZDNet](#)

AT&T 5G phone icon 'update' ridiculed

AT&T has been criticised after a software update resulted in icons used to display a connection's status showing, in some situations, that a handset is on a 5G network, even though these are not widely available. Rather than true 5G, the phones are using speed-boosting add-ons to existing 4G technology. AT&T defended the move, claiming that it was "laying the foundation" for 5G. The controversial update currently being implemented will from now on use a '5GE' icon, referring to the so-called "evolutionary" technologies for existing 4G networks. On the *Ars Technica* site, Ron Amadeo described the move as "ridiculous", warning that it could "mislead consumers". AT&T rival Verizon took out full-page ads in the *New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal* mocking its competitor.

[BBC News](#) [The Verge](#) [BGR](#) [Cnet](#) [Washington Post](#)

Some iPhone sales in Germany banned with Qualcomm bond

Qualcomm is to post \$1.5bn as a security bond to enable a ban on the sale of iPhone 7 and iPhone 8 models in Germany, ordered by the Munich District Court. The bond allows the court to pay Apple for any damages incurred if it successfully appeals the ruling, which Apple has already stated it will do. While Apple will only cease sales at its own retail locations and will continue to ship devices to third parties to sell, Qualcomm lawyers have read the court's ruling as a blanket ban on all iPhone 7 and iPhone 8 devices across the country.

Telecoms.com notes that the ban may set a precedent which could see it used as evidence for additional ruling in other markets.

DATA

Telecoms firms 'selling users' geo-location data'

A report by *Motherboard* has revealed that T-Mobile, Sprint, and AT&T are among US telecommunications firms selling access to customers' location data, which could leave users exposed to being tracked. It found that data can be re-sold on the black market once it is sold on initially by telecoms providers. T-Mobile was found to share user location data with a data aggregator firm called Zumigo, which shares information with another organisation, Microbilt, which in turn sells phone geolocation services to private industries including property managers and bail bondsmen. Frederike Kaltheuner, data exploitation programme lead at campaign group Privacy, commented: "It's part of a bigger problem; the US has a completely unregulated data ecosystem". Zumigo noted that "illegal access to data is an unfortunate occurrence across virtually every industry that deals in consumer or employee data," saying it protects privacy by not providing an exact location.

[Russia Today](#) [Total Tele](#)

Data privacy concerns persist

Concerns over data issues have continued into 2019, following scandals last year such as Cambridge Analytica's involvement in political campaigning based on Facebook users' information. A recent investigation by Motherboard concluded that "T-Mobile, Sprint, and AT&T are selling access to their customers' location data, and that data is ending up in the hands of bounty hunters and others not authorized to possess it, letting them track most phones in the country", with telecoms.com noting that "the act of selling on personal data is intrinsically open to abuse. As soon as you hand this data to a third party you lose all control over how it is used." It also suggests that GDPR appears to have little effect on one of the main industries it was intended to regulate, and that it could be in governments' interests not to over-regulate an "industry that facilitates the tracking and manipulation of the public".

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LEGAL

Reliance makes partial payment to Ericsson

Reliance Communications has made a "partial payment" to creditor Ericsson of \$18.6m at India's supreme court. The Swedish firm is pushing to have Reliance chairman Anil Ambani imprisoned for alleged contempt of court. This follows Ericsson's claim last week that Reliance breached a court order to pay \$79m in unpaid dues, and that instead of transferring funds to creditors it had "illegally pocketed" the proceeds of asset sales. Reliance Communications accused Ericsson of "attempting a trial by media and sensationalising issues", stating that the claims "gravely endangered" the interests of Reliance's secured lenders.

[Livemint](#) [Financial Times](#)

