

Coming soon: CommsDay Summit 2006

Watch this space for details

TODAY:

REACH launched phase 1 of its global NGN buildout in the UK
CROWN CASTLE is considering selling its Australian operation
MARCONI has formed a partnership with Pirelli
CHINA, KOREA & JAPAN plan to inaugurate a 4G standards group within two weeks

INFONETICS is predicting high growth for the PON industry

A HIGH PROFILE US powerline trial is to cease residential service for lack of market interest

SAMSUNG is joining the TeleManagement Forum

Plus news from MSV, Qualcomm, HKBN, Juniper and Vistula

CommsDay Global

OCTOBER 4 2005

The local newspaper for the global network

Reach steps up to NGN

International voice carrier Reach said it had launched the first stage of its "international IP enabled Next Generation Network". The network is apparently based on an Ericsson Telephony Softswitch E1N 3.1 solution which will be implemented by Reach in the United States, the UK and Hong Kong.

Reach CEO Dr Beng Yeoh said that the NGN functionality further strengthened the carrier's international voice offerings. "This enables us to offer our voice customers greater flexibility, further tailor our existing services and offer innovative multi-media services as they emerge in the not too distant future", he said.

Reach said that the NGN would allow it to co-ordinate its global traffic management and improve its interconnect arrangements. It also will cut operational costs and reduce capital requirements for future network expansion.

The first phase saw a UK cutover which saw 100 carrier suppliers and customers migrated to the network in an overnight operation that was the culmination of several months planning.



Crown Castle considers Aussie offload

US telecoms infrastructure operator Crown Castle International has revealed that it is considering a sell-off of its Australian operations, including the country's largest privately-owned collection of mobile phone towers.

In a statement released in the US on Monday, Crown Castle said that it has "commenced an evaluation of strategic alternatives" for its Australian assets, including a leveraged recapitalisation, private sale or complete/partial sale through an IPO and ASX listing. The firm said that UBS Investment Bank had been retained to oversee and advise on the process and added, "there can be no assurance that Crown Castle will undertake or pursue any particular action or alternative as a result of this review." Crown Castle management was unavailable for any further comment, however according to a source close to the company all options will be closely investigated and compared with a decision likely to be made as early as December.

The re-evaluation of Crown Castle's Australian business comes despite continued healthy revenue and margin growth for the division, including a 9.9% increase in site rentals to a total of US\$10.2 million in the most recent quarter. The company owns a network of 1,387 mobile phone towers in Australia, compared to around 11,000 in the US, where it recently reported US\$130.7 million in revenues, up 8.1%. The company reported a full-year 2004 net loss of US\$306.9 million and EBITDA of US\$45.1 million.

Crown Castle has continually said however that it is keen to reduce its approximately US\$1.5 billion long-term debt pile, and recently announced plans for a US\$1.9 billion program to buy back outstanding notes and repay an out-

standing credit facility.

The sale of Crown Castle Australia, which some observers valued yesterday at up to A\$800 million, would be the first major move in the country's wireless infrastructure market since February 2002 when Broadcast Australia snapped up the local assets of UK-based NTL for A\$850 million. Broadcast Australia yesterday gave a swift "no comment" to any possible acquisition of the Crown Castle Australian assets.

Crown Castle's announcement also comes as it moves into a new phase in the US, where it has thrown itself headlong into the potential future market for mobile television services. The company, which owns 5Mhz of unencumbered spectrum across most of the country, has partnered with the likes of Nokia, Samsung Electronics, Qualcomm and Texas Instruments to build-out a nationwide network, targeting initial commercial launches in select cities later this year. Interestingly, Broadcast Australia is currently involved in similar DVB-H trial with Nokia and Telstra in Australia.

Tim Marshall

Marconi links with Pirelli, launches IMS strategy

With speculation still swirling over its corporate future, Marconi has announced yet another partnership designed to enhance its next-generation network product suite, this time linking with Pirelli Broadband Solutions to market new multi-service platforms.

Building on existing partnerships with the likes of Huawei Technologies and Sonus Networks, Marconi's new link with Pirelli will see the two combine certain core and metro access products to be sold to the global carrier market. Specifically, Marconi will sell Pirelli's City8™ Multiservice Platform-CWDM Metro Access System, which managed by Marconi's Network Management System technology.

Marconi Communications Managing Director Giorgio Bertolina said, "this partnership sets the grounds for creating a true centre of excellence capable, starting from today, to bring an innovative and integrated metro core/metro access solution to the worldwide market."

VIDEO A MAJOR DRIVER: Pirelli Broadband Solutions CEO Mauro Sacchetto said that the emergence of high-bandwidth services such as IPTV and video is driving new demand for CWDM technologies. He said, "the demand for our CWDM technology is proof that the strategy we are pursuing is the right one. Our CWDM technology is already deployed in several telecom networks and through this strategic partnership we expect to further extend our reach in the marketplace."

Marconi's new partnership with Pirelli follows renewed speculation over its future, including potential takeovers by Huawei and Ericsson. Most recently it has been suggested that Huawei is likely to pursue a bid for Nortel Networks, leaving the door open for Ericsson to make a move on Marconi.

NEW IMS STRATEGY: Meanwhile, Marconi has announced a new strategy to help telecom operators integrate fixed and mobile communications networks using the Internet Protocol Multimedia Subsystem.

Marconi CTO Andy Evans said the introduction of IMS products increased the company's addressable market to include carriers with mobile and/or fixed-IP networks. "This is an important move towards a universally agreed fixed-mobile converged architecture. We believe the Marconi realisation of this vision offers one of the lowest total cost of ownerships in the market," he said.

Tim Marshall

SEEN & HEARD:

BT was named Best Global Carrier and its CEO Ben Verwaayen recognised as the Most Influential Person in Communications at Terrapinn's World Communication Awards in London on Monday. The best performing carrier at the event, BT was also highly commended for Best Brand and was a finalist for Best Customer Care and Best Managed Service.

The number of EDGE networks in commercial operation worldwide has trebled in the last twelve months, with a total of 116 networks in 70 countries now in use, according to the Global Mobile Suppliers Association. A year ago, there were 35 networks. The GSA also confirmed that 169 operators in 91 countries have committed to EDGE deployments, a clear majority – over 58%, of the world's 290 commercial GSM/GPRS operators.

Research released by analyst firm Osterman Research reveals that, while over half of organisations believe that Instant Messaging improves overall communications. 52% of organisations are using IM for real-world business applications although 75% of companies surveyed have not yet settled on one or more product as an IM standard, it found.

China, Korea & Japan look Beyond 3G

China, South Korea and Japan will form an official organisation to oversee

their collaborative approach to advanced wireless development. Inauguration is expected at the Beyond 3G event in Shanghai on October 18.

With the next five years considered a crucial period for the development of Super 3G or what was until recently referred to as 4G mobile, North Asian officials are keen to ensure a smooth testing environment. The new organisation aims to create a defined view of Beyond 3G and facilitate joint research projects.

Led by the International Telecommunications Union, China, South Korea and Japan have agreed to a joint approach to future mobile development. The three will collaborate to investigate technology standards, frequency spectrum and market demand, according to Xinhua reports.

Having launched its first investigations into Beyond 3G mobile in 2001, China's Telecom Research Academy, is due to launch its first technology test-bed later this year, aiming to achieve transmission rates of between 100Mbps and 1Gbps by 2010.

Telecom Research Academy Vice President Cao Shumin said, "the next five years will be a crucial period for the formation of a Beyond 3G standard and the technology is expected to be commercialised in 2015... The forum will do away with misunderstanding between Beyond 3G and 3G while creating a good environment for joint research from concerned parties."

Tim Marshall

Equinix wins credit card deal

Australian Internet based payment solutions specialist MoneySwitch has selected Equinix as its network exchange and co-location provider. MoneySwitch will use the Sydney based Equinix Internet Business Exchange as the primary site for processing credit and debit card transactions in Australia. MoneySwitch uses an open source, Web-based technology platform to authorise, switch and settle financial transactions. "By moving to Equinix's Internet hub and directly interconnecting with the large number of networks and other strategic partners operating within the centre, we can more efficiently switch transactions for our merchants, putting us on an equal footing with the other banking institutions that we compete against," said MoneySwitch CEO Jost Stollmann.

According to MoneySwitch, Equinix was selected as a partner due to its Switched IP Connectivity service (S-IPC), an Internet access service designed to fulfil the IP connectivity requirements of collocation customers looking for a one-stop-shop solution.

The S-IPC solution will allow MoneySwitch to offer reliable Internet connectivity to their merchants, which will enable these merchants to offer enhanced uptime for EFTPOS operations. Equinix is a neutral co-location player with more than 100 customers operating within the Sydney IBX centre.

Natalie Apostolou

Infonetics sees boom in PON subs

Infonetics Research says the number of PON (passive optical network) subscribers worldwide will skyrocket 1,260% between 2004 and 2008, from 1.5 million to over 20.5 million.

Worldwide PON equipment revenue will grow from \$525 million in 2004 to \$1.9 billion in 2008; while ports will grow from 1.7 million to over 8 million. "PON is growing rapidly in Asia Pacific, especially Japan, where over 2 million subscribers are already using BPON and EPON," said Michael Howard, principal analyst of Infonetics Research. "In comparison, PON is just beginning to take off in North America, as Verizon gets into high gear, quickly passing the deployment rates of independent optical carriers and local govern-

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ments. Worldwide PON revenue will get an 84% jump start between 2004 and 2006, with a major chunk coming from NTT and Verizon.”

The report finds that

- Hitachi leads worldwide PON revenue and port market share; Mitsubishi is second
- Hitachi leads in Asia Pacific, Tellabs in North America, Motorola in EMEA, Alcatel in CALA
- Broadband PON made up 81% of North American and 75% of Asia Pacific PON revenue
- 76% of PON revenue came from Asia Pacific, 20% from North America, shifting to 38% and 40%, respectively, by 2008

US powerline carrier to end residential service

PPL Corporation will end its high-profile Lehigh Valley Broadband over Power Lines (BPL) market trial for residential customers on October 31, 2005, but will continue a limited commercial service for large businesses.

“While our market trials indicate that BPL technology is promising, the combination of a competitive marketplace and the need for significant scale has led us to the decision not to proceed as a retail communications service provider,” said David Kelley, president, PPL Telcom.

PPL has notified residential market trial customers in those areas of its decision. The company will give those customers a \$50 credit to ease the transition to another Internet service provider.

“PPL Telcom will continue with its telecommunications transport business, offering fiber optic capacity to other telecommunications companies and businesses in Pennsylvania and the mid-Atlantic region,” Kelley said. PPL Telcom’s fiber optic network extends throughout the northeast corridor from New York City to Washington, D.C., to Baltimore and to Philadelphia, as well as into the Harrisburg, Pittsburgh, Lancaster and York areas.

The decision is a major setback for broadband powerline as PPL was regarded as one of its leading advocates.

Samsung joins TM Forum

Samsung Electronics is the latest vendor to join the global TeleManagement Forum (TM Forum) to work on the Co-operative OSS Project (CO-OP) designed to improve the interoperability of mobile network management systems, and simplifying the operation of the mobile networks they support.

Samsung joins Alcatel, Ericsson, Huawei, Lucent, Motorola, NEC, Nokia, Nortel and Siemens in this industry initiative to implement standards designed to meet service provider requirements for ease of operation of 2G and 3G wireless networks for both GSM and CDMA.

“Adding Samsung to the team will strengthen the TM Forum's ability and status to guide constructive change in the OSS industry, and reduce the hurdles and integration costs usually linked with managing multi-vendor networks,” said TeleManagement Forum founder and chairman Keith Willetts.

Launched in October 2004, the TeleManagement Forum’s CO-OP Project has engaged interest from all sectors of the telecommunications industry and has already delivered Phase One of the project, demonstrating integration in the areas of performance management and radio network cell border configuration.

Phase Two will see a special focus on the development and extension of specification work on interoperability testing and the ease of desktop integration. CO-OP activity enables service providers to easily and dynamically integrate domain managers from different vendors in order to perform operations

DIARY:

18-20 October 2005:
Wireless Broadband Week 2005 (Singapore) is set to gather key industry players together to differentiate and clarify questions about the numerous wireless broadband technologies like IP Wireless, Flarion, WiMAX, SOMA, HSDPA, EVDO and Navini. Supported by the Infocomm Development Authority of Singapore, this 3 day-forum will host objective industry views from service providers like Bharti Televentures, Woosh Wireless, Unwired Australia, Pacific Internet, Maxis and Personal Broadband Australia. For more information, please contact Telecom IQ at tel: (65) 6722 9388

that will affect network infrastructure from several vendors.

Natalie Apostolou

MSV ISSUED BROADBAND SATELLITE PATENT

Virginia's Mobile Satellite Ventures said the United States Patent and Trademark Office issued to MSV a patent, which is directly relevant to all future broadband multi-spotbeam satellite systems and particularly to broadband multi-spotbeam satellite systems supporting an Ancillary Terrestrial Component (ATC). The patent, U.S. Patent No. 6,937,857, is specifically directed to the "packing" and "unpacking" of feeder link carriers at the satellite and satellite gateway to minimize feeder link bandwidth requirements. With new multi-spotbeam satellite systems, this feature is critical for operation within available feeder link carrier limits. "This patent is of particular import to satellite system development," said Dr. Peter D. Karabinis, Vice President and Chief Technical Officer at MSV. "It is expected that in the future broadband multi-spotbeam satellite systems will be configured to perform packing and unpacking of feeder link carriers as covered by the '857 patent, otherwise the feeder link bandwidth requirements would be staggering. This patent covers key technologies necessary to keep the feeder link bandwidth requirements of a broadband multi-spotbeam satellite system manageable."

QUALCOMM CLAIMS GPS IMPROVEMENTS

Qualcomm says that it has included improved GPS positioning functions in its latest Mobile Station Modem chips for CDMA2000 1X networks. Improvements include increased sensitivity of up to -159 dB, enhanced indoor accuracy and the simultaneous operation of voice and GPS positioning for location-based services and E911 calls. The enhancements to Qualcomm's gpsOne solution featured on the MSM6125 are also found on the MSM6500 and MSM6550 chipsets for CDMA2000 1xEV-DO networks.

HKBN LAUNCHES PORTABLE VOIP

Hong Kong Broadband Network announced the launch of its 2b Broadband Phone service, a software based VOIP phone service. When users install 2b Broadband Phone software overseas, they can make outgoing calls to and take incoming calls from any Hong Kong fixed line telephone, mobile phone, office telephone and other 2b Broadband Phone user on an un-metered basis via their assigned Hong Kong local number. HKBN charges a single US\$6 (HK\$48) fixed price monthly package, free from IDD and roaming charges.

JUNIPER SINGAPORE WIN

Juniper Networks said Singapore's Nanyang Technological University has deployed the Juniper Networks Secure Access 1000 SSL VPN appliance to enable its IT staff to remotely manage 85 eLearning servers in the University's eLearning Operations Center.

VISTULA BRINGS VOIP TO SAIGON

New York's Vistula Communications Services signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Saigon Post and Telecommunications Services Corporation for the implementation of Vistula's V-Cube VoIP platform in Vietnam. Following installation and testing by SPT, Vistula expects to enter into an agreement with SPT under which SPT will implement V-Cube as the core engine delivering a range of VoIP to the Vietnamese market. SPT will market these services to its extensive existing client base as well as to new business and residential end-users.

ABOUT COMMSDAY GLOBAL:

CommsDay Global is produced by Decisive Publishing ABN 13 065 084 960.

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