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India

Indian R&D to lead IBM's charge into mobile market

In the world of mobile software and services IBM hasn't figured prominently. That is about to change with the announcement of a major research program that IBM says will enable users to do on a mobile "everything you can with a PC and much more."

The initiative was announced in India at a commemoration marking the 10th anniversary of IBM's Indian R&D labs. It will be lead by India but eight global labs in six countries will participate in a series of projects that will include:

- The Spoken Web - Voice-enabled mobile commerce;
- Instant Translation - Real-time communication between multiple languages through mobile devices;
- SoulPad - Enabling "any portable device to carry computing applications in your pocket";
- Social networking on-the-go;
- Good Samaritan - Mobile healthcare information made available in any emergency situation.

According to IBM the new program marks a significant expansion in the role of its Indian lab which has to date been focussed on the local market. "For the past 10 years, IBM's India Research Lab has worked with local clients and partners to shape India's innovation landscape, helping transform it into a significant contributor to the world economy. Now, the India research team will serve as IBM's catalyst for delivering new mobile web solutions to emerging markets around the world.... IBM is making major investments in mobile software and hardware platforms and has opened several worldwide telecom solutions labs focused on research and development."

India is an appropriate location for such research: mobile phone penetration is increasing rapidly among a largely literate population and recent research commissioned by Nokia shows mobile services as having a hugely transformative effect on India's economy.

Mobile devices far outstrip PCs in emerging economies such as India and are likely to become the main means of Internet access for much of the population. According to IBM, "much of the world's population is looking to mobile devices to tap into online resources to fulfil basic economic needs - in banking, e-commerce, education, transportation and government...Compared to PCs, the primary access mechanism to the world wide web, mobile phones have made a phenomenal penetration into this population segment. Low cost of ownership, the simple user interface consisting of a small keyboard, limited menu and voice-based access contribute to the success of mobile phones with the less literate. However, apart from basic voice communication, these people are not being able to exploit the benefits of information and services available to web users."

IBM's Institute for Business Value predicts the number of mobile Web users will grow by 191 percent from 2006 to 2011 to reach one billion. "This proliferation of mobile devices and mobile Web users signals an incredibly lucrative growth opportunity for businesses," it says.

The study commissioned by Nokia in late 2006 www.nokia.com/universalaccess and undertaken by The Centre for Knowledge Societies (CKS) showed that mobile communication was revolutionising economic and social life in rural India, spawning a wave of local entrepreneurs and creating greater access to social services.

It identified seven major service sectors including transport, finance and healthcare that could be radically transformed through mobile technologies. and called on national and international governments, the mobile industry and NGOs to work together to support the development of these services by increasing access to, and use of, mobile communications in rural communities.

According to Nokia, research was based on detailed ethnography and participant observation on communities in three rural areas - Badaun in Uttar Pradesh, Satara in Maharashtra and Chittradura in Karnataka - and one urban area, Bengaluru.

Researchers meet with small business owners, farmers, home owners and others to understand how mobile communication had already transformed their daily lives and the further potential of mobile communications to enhance livelihoods.

The report includes 16 case studies of individuals interviewed for the report including small business people, entrepreneurs, home owners, farmers and many others. These explored how mobile ownership had impacted their lives and businesses.

Vodafone to launch iPhone in India?

India's Business Standard newspaper reports that Vodafone will launch the iPhone in India in the first week of September and quotes Apple sources saying Vodafone will also be a non-exclusive iPhone seller in Australia.

The paper quoted an "Apple source in Singapore" saying: "The carrier deal for India is being worked out with Vodafone," and that "Vodafone could also become the carrier for the Australian market once iPhone is launched there, though more than one carrier is likely for Australia."

Although Vodafone officially denied the claims, the paper said that sources within Vodafone had "confirmed the iPhone carrier deal with Apple [for India] though the exact commercial terms were not disclosed." and added: "the Apple retail sources also did not rule out Apple extending universal access for iPhone users to all major telecom carriers in India, acknowledging that users' ability to 'unlock' the phones tended to negate exclusivity deals.

India is planning to introduce full mobile number portability - The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has recommended a nationwide deadline of June 2009. The iPhone would be very much a 'high end' product in the Indian market, but nevertheless sales could be huge: the Indian mobile market is growing very rapidly. According to IDC, user numbers are set to double to 500 million by 2010.

According to *Business Standard*: "The real signs of 'iFatigue' in India over the long wait for the iPhone are evident on Internet chat forums where users debate thorny issues like how to unlock the iPhone without losing call quality, free open source hacker kits like AppTapp, the best unlock deals at the right price, and quick bargains in the grey market...[However] those awaiting the launch agree that it's better to have the ecosystem in place before buying the phone. The rewards of buying the kosher version far outstrip the risks of...the grey market, and hacking and re-hacking the device every time Apple releases a software upgrade."

MySpace opens MySpace India

Social network site, MySpace has launched MySpace India a new dedicated community designed for Indian users.

MySpace India will launch with a range of industry partnerships and product innovations including an alliance with Star TV, India's largest television network, to create an original network television program 'Campus Star' featured on Channel V (<http://www.myspace.com/channelv>). The new show, currently airing on television in India, is a nationwide college talent competition featuring celebrity judges and the voting MySpace audience.

MySpace says it is committed to working with local developers across India and empowering them with the necessary tools to build applications for the site's more than 250 million registers users worldwide. To date, MySpace has hosted local "devJAM" developer workshops in Beijing, Tokyo, Seoul, Sydney, London, Berlin, Seattle, Stockholm, and San Francisco.

The launch of MySpace India follows the launch of MySpace Korea a week earlier.

Taiwan

Intel to invest \$US500m in WiMAX in Taiwan

The Taiwan Ministry of Economic Affairs (MOEA) and Intel Taiwan have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to jointly accelerate the commercial deployment of WiMAX in Taiwan.

From 2008 to 2013, Intel plans to invest \$US500 million covering across-the-board procurement and investment in Taiwan, including WiMAX. In March Intel set up the WiMAX Program Office in Taiwan, appointing Robert Wang as its director to coordinate for the cooperation with government organizations, operators and industries in Taiwan on WiMAX.

The collaboration is also expected to enhance the global competitiveness of Taiwan-originated WiMAX offerings through greater in, according to Intel.

Under the terms of the MoU, Intel and the MOEA will evaluate the creation of a business entity for WiMAX system integration and invite relevant Taiwanese industries to invest in this business entity, whose services will include consultation on WiMAX network infrastructure design, and integration of WiMAX equipment, services, applications, as well as client devices.

The MOEA and Intel have formed a task force to discuss the investment target, investment amount, business model and operations of the business entity. These details are expected to be finalised by the end of 2008.

The MOEA and Intel will also work together to encourage the industry to improve compatibility and interoperability between WiMAX network infrastructure and devices. Intel will use its global WiMAX testing experience to help Taiwanese vendors develop WiMAX equipment and solutions that work well with global WiMAX networks.

Yen-Shiang Shih, administrative deputy minister of Economic Affairs, said: "Since the Ministry of Economic Affairs signed an MOU with Intel in 2005, we have been working with Intel to assist the Taiwan network communications industry in developing WiMAX equipment and conducting international conferences, as well as exhibitions, and inviting the WiMAX Forum to set up its certification lab and office in Taiwan. As a result, the development of WiMAX has been very rapid in Taiwan.

"The future challenges that the Taiwan WiMAX industry faces is how to offer innovative applications and services, develop WiMAX-based mobile devices, and provide total solutions. Such needs have prompted our cooperation with Intel again. We appreciate Intel's support to the Taiwan WiMAX industry over the past three years, and look forward to even more successful collaboration this time to help accelerate the WiMAX industry development in Taiwan."

In addition to help advance the development of Taiwan's IT industries, Intel also confirmed that it will be the diamond-level sponsor of the forthcoming 2008 WiMAX Expo Taipei. The global event, June 2-6, will showcase how Taiwan-originated WiMAX solutions can enable a more convenient mobile lifestyle.

South Korea

Bell Labs & ETRI team for R&D

Alcatel-Lucent's Bell Labs research organisation has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Korean Ministry of Knowledge Economy's Electronics and Telecommunications Research Institute (ETRI).

It provides a framework for the two parties to cooperate in R&D projects into critical technology areas of communications, specifically: advanced optical communications and network applications; wireless technologies, networks and applications; and fundamental studies in the enabling sciences, including mathematical sciences, computer science, and physics.

"The Ministry of Knowledge Economy is a shining, innovative model of proactive government engagement in supporting the development of a national innovation culture – one that will generate new technologies at the forefront of IT and communications," said Jeong Kim, president of Bell Labs. "We are proud to partner with the ministry's Electronics and Telecommunications Research Institute and see this as just the first step in a deep and longstanding engagement between Alcatel-Lucent Bell Labs and the government of Korea and its scientists to generate fundamental innovations that will change the world around us."

ETRI has been playing a key role in boosting Korean ICT technologies for more than 30 years. It has successfully commercialised advanced and new technologies such as DRAM, CDMA, DMB (Digital Multimedia Broadcasting) and WiBro (Wireless Broadband). It has more than 1,900 researchers in its Daejeon campus. Over 96 percent of them have master's or doctor's degrees.

ETRI is performing major government-funded projects for the Ministry of Knowledge and Economy, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Broadcasting and Communications Commission. Its R&D capability is divided in four larger sections: convergence components and materials, broadcasting and telecommunications convergence, software and content, and IT convergence technology.

BroadSoft names new VP of sales for Korea

VoIP application developer, BroadSoft, has named James Angelone as regional vice president of sales for Korea.

BroadSoft says his appointment coincides with its service provider customers beginning to extend their VoIP services to the Korean residential market.

Angelone has lived in Korea for nearly 20 years and has held several executive leadership positions including roles in sales, marketing, channel management, sales operations and joint ventures. He has worked for AT&T-Networks/Lucent Technologies, where he managed international telecommunications and broadband networking sales for both service provider and enterprise markets.

He joins BroadSoft from PacketFront AB, a fibre-to-the-home (FTTH) technology and next-generation broadband aggregation solutions vendor, where he was vice president of sales. BroadSoft customers in Korea include KT, Hanaro Telecom, SK Telink, CJ Systems and Samsung Networks.

Singapore

SingTel Mobile launches value-added SMS features

SingTel Mobile has launched Acision's Message Plus across its subscriber base to support new value-added SMS features accessible from the subscriber's handset under the name, SMS Plus:

Three new services will be offered:

- Automated Out-of-Office SMS: Customers can set to automatically send either a default or customised out-of-office SMS reply, similar to an out-of-office email;
- SMS copy: Customers can copy incoming and outgoing SMSes to five email addresses or mobile numbers;
- SMS divert: Customers have the flexibility to divert incoming SMSes to one email address and one mobile number.

Boudewijn Pesch, managing director, Acision, Asia Pacific said: "SMS volume growth is only the first part of the story for operators like SingTel Mobile. Once the volumes are established it is essential that the industry continues to innovate messaging services, adding features and functionalities to maintain messaging as a central tool in their lives. Through continued innovation, operators can begin to differentiate themselves on the strength of their messaging service – and even secure greater revenues through value-added services. With half of all text and multimedia messages sent globally processed using our systems, we continue to dominate in driving messaging innovation."

SingTel to build new 'green' data centre

SingTel is to build a new 15,000 square metre 'green' data centre, that will be one of the largest data centres in Singapore.

The Kim Chuan Telecommunications Centre 2 (KCTC-2) is expected to be completed in early 2010. SingTel says it sees the growth of higher performance computing - such as blade servers and the iN2015 government initiative - driving the demand for new data centre facilities that can support next-generation infocomm requirements.

SingTel's total data centre capacity in Singapore will be increased to more than 50,000 square metres with the addition of KCTC-2. The new centre will be located next to SingTel's existing data centre at Kim Chuan and will be its fifth facility in Singapore.

KCTC-2 will be built to Tier-4 specifications, the industry's most stringent data centre standards. It will have high capacity power and cooling systems with full redundancy, advanced fire suppression systems and cabling infrastructure designed with diversity to ensure maximum uptime. It will be constructed to meet the recently revised requirements of the Building and Construction Authority's (BCA) Green Mark scheme, a green building rating system that evaluates buildings based on criteria such as energy and water efficiency, as well as environmental protection and innovation.

New Zealand

New Zealand National Party touts fibre to the home

New Zealand's National Party has made a pre-election promise to invest \$NZ1.5 billion over the next six years to rollout fibre to the majority of New Zealand homes.

National Party leader John Key set out his party's policy in a lengthy speech to his party's conference advocating widespread FTTH as the most appropriate technology for a future NZ broadband network saying: "I think this is a case where a future-thinking Government, with a view to the long-term and an appreciation of the wider public benefits, needs to step in...In Government, National will have two key tools available for speeding up the roll-out of fibre-to-the-home. The first is regulation, and the second is capital investment from the Crown Account...Our initial goal is to ensure the accelerated roll-out of fibre right to the home of 75 percent of New Zealanders."

Key said that, in the first six years, priority would be given to business premises, schools, health facilities, and the first tranche of homes. "In achieving this we also want to significantly enhance broadband access and speeds for those households and premises for which fibre-to-the-home is not immediately feasible...Today, I am pleased to announce that, subject to adherence to the principles I have just laid out, the next National Government will contribute an investment of up to \$NZ1.5 billion in Crown capital over six years to accelerate the roll-out of a fibre-to-the-home network for New Zealand."

Key said that delivering on his party's goals would "require a carefully thought-through and negotiated investment and regulatory model," and he promised to conduct these negotiations in the first year of government. "As prime minister, I intend to take a leading role in them...In doing so, I will be wary of the kind of shadow-boxing that has all too often typified the relationship between government and the telecommunications industry. I won't put up with game-playing. If that means knocking some metaphoric heads together, then that is what I will do."

Communications minister, David Cunliffe, slammed the National's plan, branding it "a case of back to the future." He said: "If this extravagant subsidy is ever rolled out all of the good work the government, industry, and business have done in dismantling Telecom's monopoly position will be lost," He has challenged Key to debate with him "how National's plan avoids creating a new monopoly, wasting taxpayers' money and reducing competition."

According to Cunliffe, the plan "puts all of National's eggs in Telecom's basket and means the incumbent has both them and the market over a barrel in future access pricing negotiations...National's plan risks not only a new round of regulatory failure but would also be a huge waste of taxpayers' money due to the lack of market leverage and the ability of the incumbent to take subsidies straight to the bottom line. [It] flies in the face of this government's widely welcomed moves to create competition in New Zealand's broadband market."

Key's plans, are remarkably similar to those put out earlier this month by The New Zealand Institute, a privately funded think-tank that is "committed to generating new and creative debate, ideas, and solutions that contribute to building a better and more prosperous New Zealand for all New Zealanders." On 2 April it released *Delivering On The Broadband Aspiration: A Recommended Pathway To Fibre For New Zealand*, the fourth and final publication in its broadband project.

Telecom NZ names group to oversee operational separation

Telecom New Zealand has named the remaining four members of the Independent Oversight Group (IOG) that will monitor its compliance with the operational separation regime.

They are Dave Frow, former CEO of state owned enterprise ECNZ, and Jerry Rickman, a chartered accountant with experience in governance for various community organisations. Telecom's members of the IOG will be board member Ron Spithill (former CEO of Alcatel Australia) and the general manager of Telecom International, Anthony Briscoe. Telecom two weeks ago named retired High Court Judge, Barry Paterson as IOG chair.

Since leaving ECNZ Frow has been a company director, senior energy advisor and strategic management consultant specialising in the energy, postal, water management and manufacturing sectors. Rickman spent much of his career with chartered accountants Beattie Rickman in Hamilton. He is an associate of the Arbitrators and Mediators Institute of New Zealand, chair of Learning Media and of the Waikato Regional Airport.

Simon Moutter to head Telecom NZ transformation

Telecom NZ has named Simon Moutter to the newly-created role of chief transformation officer, Telecom Group and Chris Quin as CEO of Gen-I New Zealand and Australia.

Telecom CEO, Paul Reynolds, said the new role was "reflective of the sheer size and scope of the transformation ahead for Telecom. We need to deliver our regulatory undertakings and build a series of new, world class networks and services."

Moutter will "lead the wide-ranging programmes that aim to transform the Telecom Group by embedding customer focus, enabling new technologies and delivering productivity benefits. "He has held several executive roles in Telecom, most recently as COO Business and acting COO Telecom Retail. Quin has been with Telecom since 1991 and has been general manager of Gen-i in New Zealand for the last few years.

Thailand

Shin Satellite becomes Thaicom

Shin Satellite Public Company Limited (Sattel), the operator of the Ipstar satellite broadband system, has changed its name to Thaicom Public Company Limited.

It will have a new symbol THCOM on the Stock Exchange of Thailand. Otherwise, the legal entity, structure and the management of the company remain unchanged.

Thaicom is the name given by His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand for shin Satellite's first national satellite project and according to Shin Satellite, it is a well established name in the global satellite industry.

Thaicom currently has four satellites in geosynchronous orbit: Thaicom 1A, Thaicom 2, Thaicom 4 (Ipstar) and Thaicom 5.

Thaicom Plc's core businesses include: satellite communications and related services, internet related services, telephone-related services, and telephone directories and distribution.

Pan Asia

Star picks BT for global programme distribution

Asian media and entertainment company, Star Group, has awarded BT's Media and Broadcast sector a multi-million dollar three year managed service IP network solution contract.

The service will run across BT's Global Media Network, an MPLS enabled IP network designed specifically for carrying broadcast traffic. Initially Star will carry eight channels – Star Plus, Star One, Star News, Vijay, Star Gold, Star Chinese Movies, Star Chinese Channel and [V] Taiwan – from Hong Kong to Los Angeles. Signals will be fed through direct to home (DTH) platforms including deploying connectivity to DirecTV, Echostar and cable systems that reach millions of subscribers across the United States.

According to BT, by using its core IP network, Star is gaining access to a globally deployed media IP network that already touches over 300 points of presence in 170 countries.

Star CTO, Guo Xiao Yong, said: "This is our second media IP contract with BT and we have been extremely pleased with the service. It has proven to be cost effective, flawlessly reliable and resilient. BT's service has provided us with a giant technology leap, particularly in assisting us to expand the distribution of our channels in North America."

According to BT, its video-enabled global media network is one of the only IP networks which can connect the customer to multiple platforms across many countries without having to move out of the network. "This significantly guards against risk, provides resilience, disaster recovery and continuity planning," BT claims.

In October 2007, BT's Media and Broadcast sector implemented a network based managed services deal for Star that shifted technology platforms from the traditional satellite and leased circuit service to MPLS/IP technology for their contribution link to Europe.

Star broadcasts over 60 television services in ten languages to more than 300 million viewers across 53 Asian countries. Star channels cover all genres including general entertainment (Star Plus, Xing Kong, Star Chinese Channel, Star One, Star Utsav, Star World, Vijay, antv, Phoenix Chinese), sports (ESPN, Star Sports), movies (Star Chinese Movies, Star Gold, Star Movies), music (Channel [V]), and news and current affairs (Star News, Star Ananda, Star Majha, Phoenix InfoNews Channel).

Star controls over 20,000 hours of Indian and Chinese programming and also owns the world's largest contemporary Chinese film library, with more than 600 titles. Star is a wholly owned subsidiary of News Corporation.

Mobile device management a multibillion dollar market

More and more enterprises are equipping staff with mobile devices tightly integrated into corporate IT systems and the devices themselves are becoming much more powerful and sophisticated.

So it's hardly surprising that the market for systems and services to manage and monitor these devices is tipped for massive growth. Mobile device management services include policy development, procurement and asset management, billing audit and reconciliation, enhanced customer care, device/content security, and additional services that are vertical- and occupation-specific.

According to ABI Research, the market for mobile device management (MDM) services was worth \$US583 million in 2007 and will grow at a CAGR of 80 percent to be worth \$US20 billion by 2013. However, ABI says it is far from clear which industry segment will garner most of these revenues.

According to principal analyst Dan Shey, "The range of services needed to manage a business's mobile investments requires inputs from many different wireless equipment and services providers including operators, MDM platform vendors, IT services providers, telecom expense management firms, and mobility management services firms. All want to be part of the action."

And, he adds: "the biggest disruptors for the market have yet to make their mark on the industry. Mobile device management platforms are slowly evolving with more and more capabilities for mobile device management services. Their increasing functionality on a growing base of device platforms automates many important mobile device management processes. Not only can these platforms be employed by many value chain suppliers, but more importantly, businesses can acquire and use these platforms themselves."

Shey concludes: "Operators are the dark horses in this race: they provide and appropriate revenues for nearly all mobile capabilities, they already use MDM platforms, and they value the mobile business customer highly."

● Sybase Afaria now manages Symbian

Meanwhile Sybase - the leader in mobile device management systems according to IDC - has added support for Symbian to the Afaria component of its Information Anywhere Suite which provides mobile device management and security capabilities.

Afaria previously could manage only Windows Mobile and Palm devices, and Windows laptops.

Security capabilities provided for Symbian OS v9 include: enforced power-on password; administrator defined password format requirements; password expiration; device lockdown after exceeding allowed password attempts. Mobile management capabilities include: over the air software distribution; data backup and restore; hardware and software inventory collection; software license management; custom scripting component for automating electronic file distribution, file and directory management, program execution and notifications.

Sybase claims that IDC has "recognised Sybase and its iAnywhere subsidiary as the leader in mobile device management enterprise software with higher revenues and market share in a top 15 list that makes up more than three-fourths of the market and is dominated by large systems management vendors, mobility companies, and smaller pure-play MDM vendors."

AT&T and Cisco team to push telepresence

AT&T and Cisco have teamed up to offer the Cisco Telepresence high resolution 'virtual reality' videoconferencing technology for installation in the offices of client companies as a fully managed service.

Three-screen and one-screen site options will be available, based on Cisco TelePresence System 3000 and Cisco TelePresence System 1000 endpoints. The equipment will be owned by AT&T which will provide installation, monitoring and management of the application, network connectivity to support the system, remote help desk service and on-site equipment maintenance and repair.

According to Cisco, the network will be the first of its kind and will also be the first to provide a 'meet-me' feature that will support inter-company conferencing. It is expected to be available in the second half of 2008 in 23 countries and more in 2009.

Cisco says that it and AT&T have started early trials with key customers. "Sales teams from AT&T and Cisco will target US based multinational companies and selected companies headquartered outside of the US in their initial efforts."

The two companies say they have "joined forces to enable the growth and use of telepresence technology among businesses and organisations," and that the announcement is "the first of what is expected to be many industry-leading innovations to be introduced by AT&T and Cisco." AT&T plans to develop industry-specific applications for telepresence across a range of industries - including health care, high-tech, retail and government.

AT&T is already using the technology internally. According to Ronald E Spears, AT&T group president of Global Business Services, AT&T already has 11 Cisco TelePresence sites in AT&T offices around the US and plans to add more in overseas offices in the coming year. "We're already seeing tremendous value from the ability to bring our management team together for face to face meetings on a regular basis, even though they are scattered across the country. Not only are we saving time and expense associated with travel, but we are much more productive. When we implement the intercompany telepresence capability, we expect to quickly start using it to build closer relationships with our key customers throughout the world," he said.

Cisco claims that more than 500 Telepresence units have been ordered by more than 100 customers since the product's introduction in October 2006 and claims that it is "the unit sales leader in this fast growing market segment."

In addition, Cisco has equipped more than 200 Cisco TelePresence rooms in its own offices in 30 countries and 95 cities and says that, with usage averaging five hours per day per room, compared to traditional video conferencing, which is typically used

less than 30 minutes per day per endpoint, it believes it has gained more than \$60 million in productivity improvements.

Submarine cable market heading for another boom-bust

TeleGeography is forecasting a repeat of the boom and bust cycle that devastated the submarine cable industry in 2000-2003, saying that another 25 systems are likely to be built between now and 2010.

According to TeleGeography, "The investment boom is global, with new cables planned for every regional market, with the exception of the Atlantic [and] for once, dwindling capacity is not the only reason for the new wave of construction."

TeleGeography claims that less than 25 percent of potential capacity on existing subsea cables on major routes is active and says new cable projects are forming out of a need for a broader range of restoration options in case of cable failures, the desire for more diverse routes between two destinations, and stubbornly high capacity prices in markets that have ample capacity but few competitors.

"While most cables are being built in response to individual carriers' business needs, there is a real risk of oversupply in both Africa and across the Pacific," it concludes.

The last boom resulted in several global systems - Flag, Tyco and Global Crossing - getting into financial strife and being sold for a fraction of their build cost to Asian owners. It also resulted in manufacturers being forced to mothball or close manufacturing capacity. According to TeleGeography, the industry has a difficult choice to make: The rapid expansion of network construction also presents a challenge for the equipment makers that are building these cables. After lying fallow for almost half a decade, equipment vendors are suddenly having to ramp up production to meet surging demand. However, these suppliers are keenly aware of the cyclical nature of the submarine cable industry and wish to avoid being left with excess manufacturing capacity once this building boom wanes."

However, on TeleGeography's estimates the investment in new systems will be only a fraction of that made during the previous boom from about 1999-2001. In the peak year alone, 2001, investment was close to \$US14 billion and totalled \$US10 billion in the two years prior. TeleGeography is forecasting 2008 investments to be less than \$US2b, in 2009 \$US4b and in 2010 about \$US1.5b.

Vint Cerf urges Pacific Islands to collaborate for Internet access

Vint Cerf - Internet elder statesman and now a vice president and chief Internet evangelist at Google - has urged the administrations of Pacific Island nations to collaborate to boost Internet access via satellite.

{mosloadposition stuart}In a video posted on YouTube, Cerf says "Access to Internet is such a huge challenge in the Pacific...we are forced to make use of satellite which is not inexpensive and it has been my belief that a collaboration to make bulk purchase for access to satellite capacity with landings in the various islands could be very beneficial."

He added: "The variations [in access to Internet] in the Pacific Islands are very wide but nothing is more important than getting all islands online and actively participating. It enables a local island economy to reach out and take advantage of parts of the world where Internet is already actively in use, You can create opportunities for work on the islands.

The video was produced as an invitation <http://www.picisoc.org/tiki-index.php> to the forthcoming annual conference of the Pacific Islands chapter of the Internet Society to be held in Rarotonga in the Cook Islands in September 2008. And Cerf suggested that the potential collaboration should be pursued as part of the discussions at PacINET 2008.

Packet Design opens Asia Pac office in Hong Kong

Packet Design, a pioneer in route analytics technology for managing large IP networks, has opened a sales and support office in Hong Kong to handle its growing base of customers in Asia.

The new office, Packet Design's first direct presence in the Far East, will work with regional reseller partners to serve customers in China, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and southeast Asian nations.

Managing the Hong Kong office is Patrick Li, a 10-year networking industry veteran, who has joined Packet Design as systems engineering manager for Asia Pacific and Japan. He previously worked for a number of US-based companies in the Asia Pacific region, serving as technical support manager for Cabletron Networks, senior network consultant for Extreme Networks, and technical manager for Peribit Networks.

Steve Ackley, Packet Design's vice president of worldwide sales, said: "The Hong Kong location is strategic as a gateway to mainland China and Southeast Asia, and having an office there gives us ready access to the growing number of enterprises and service providers who are looking for advanced IP network management solutions. As a world financial hub, Hong Kong also offers us a unique opportunity to be close to customers and prospects in the financial services arena, a key market for route analytics."

Packet Design has already begun to establish in the Asia Pacific region through partners and resellers, including Expernet (Korea), Super Instruments and GuoMai Technologies (China), Ring Line (Taiwan), Alunan Persada (Malaysia) and Toyo Electronics (Japan). In September 2007 Packet Design retained SeekerTech, which specialises in building Asia-Pacific business for high-technology companies, to manage and expand its reseller base in the region.

Packet Design claims to have pioneered the field of route analytics and to be the leading supplier of network appliances that provide routing-layer visibility into IP networks. The company was founded in March 2003 by serial entrepreneur and former Cisco CTO Judy Estrin and former Cisco chief scientist Van Jacobson.

Data recovery specialist Kroll Ontrack opens in HK & Singapore

Kroll Ontrack, a provider of data recovery and legal technologies products and services, has opened new offices in Singapore and Hong Kong.

The new offices will be managed by Adrian Briscoe, general manager for Kroll Ontrack Asia Pacific, who also heads up the Australian business and has more than 20 years' experience in the IT industry. The new offices are equipped to provide data recovery and computer forensics solutions through their in-lab and clean room services, remote service, on-site service, custom service and do-it-yourself software.

Kroll Ontrack claims to offer "the fastest, most convenient and cost-effective solutions to local APAC businesses, individuals and government entities." The company says that, in addition to a comprehensive suite of data recovery and forensics solutions that can aid in the recovery of lost or corrupted data from virtually all types of operating systems and storage devices, it is "dedicated to providing secure and reliable service throughout the entire data recovery process."

The company offers around-the-clock customer service in 14 languages, real-time tracking of job progress through Ontrack Online and Ontrack VeriFile reports, which allow customers to view the condition of all their recoverable files before deciding to proceed with a data recovery service.

"Singapore and Hong Kong's strategic geographic locations as regional business hubs in Asia Pacific paired with growing data recovery needs in these areas makes them very critical and significant markets," said Briscoe,