

ExchangeAsia

Volume 16 Issue 23

ISSN 1320 – 2669

22 June 2008

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China

Tata Comms forms "historic" JV with CEC

Tata Communications International Pte Ltd, a wholly owned subsidiary of Tata Communications, has signed an equity joint venture agreement with the shareholders of China Enterprise Communications Limited (CEC) under which it will acquire 50 percent of CEC.

The JV will - subject to approvals from the relevant government and regulatory bodies in China - be the first of its kind in the Chinese telecom sector since China entered the WTO. According to Camille Mendler - vice president of Yankee Group's Enterprise Research Group, "This is a historic investment. Not only does it [enable] unprecedented reach into China and India for global enterprises, it also confirms Tata Communications' leading position in service delivery to emerging markets."

"The strategic cooperation between China Enterprise Communications Ltd. and Tata Communications was carried out under the background of economic globalisation, and the fact that China and India are driving the 21st century world economy," said CEC president and CEO Zhu Jianhua. "Through the cooperation with Tata Communications, we will focus on the development of the domestic market to provide high quality networking services to multinational enterprises in China as well as China's domestic enterprises. We intend to grow the strength of the China Enterprise Communications brand."

CEC is a value-added telecommunications services and integrated IT solutions provider headquartered in Beijing. It was recently awarded a nationwide IP-VPN service license by China's Ministry of Information Industry (MII), the first telecom valued-added service license granted to a non-facilities based service provider.

CEC has network reach throughout China, with no regional restrictions on its service capabilities. IT provides VPN connectivity reach into 347 cities in China, including a dual-pop presence in tier-one cities like Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Shenzhen. This complements Tata Communications' VPN presence in 120 Indian cities and 19 other major business capitals in North America, Europe and Asia.

CEC is majority owned by CITIC (China International Trust and Investment Corporation); other investors include SASAC and CE-SCM.

Alcatel-Lucent wins \$US1b China Mobil TD-SCDMA deal

Alcatel-Lucent has signed a \$US1 billion framework agreement for 2008 with China Mobile to provide mobile communication equipment and services.

The deal was secured through Alcatel-Lucent's flagship company in China, Alcatel Shanghai Bell. Under it Alcatel-Lucent will provide China Mobile with mobile core network solutions, wireless network solutions, TD-SCDMA equipment, applications, transmission and IP router equipment and the related services.

India

Tata Comms expands conferencing with GlobalMeet

Tata Communications has expanded its conferencing portfolio by acquiring the rights to offer GlobalMeet India, an audio conferencing service for India-based enterprises and those with strong business ties to the subcontinent.

The GlobalMeet India service offers domestic toll-free and a network of local numbers in more than 18 major business centres across India, integrated with international toll-free access from 30 countries worldwide. According to Tata Comms, "a significantly broader base of customers can now easily utilise the service, which was

virtually unavailable to a number of users who were unable to access international direct dial facilities through their phone service."

Tata Comms says that GlobalMeet India's integrated solution "allows for simplified billing, dependable cost reporting, the ability to contract in India while billing in Indian currency and providing world-class customer support along with a trusted account team. As the conference bridge is located domestically, GlobalMeet India eliminates problems relating to quality, including delays and voice latencies, due to inconsistent fibre and satellite paths and dropped calls."

"Tata Communications is offering GlobalMeet India to answer the growing demand for high-quality conferencing services at competitive price points," said John Landau, senior vice president, global managed services, Tata Communications. "This best-in-class global solution creates a reservation-less conferencing platform that is easy to use while enabling enterprises to increase productivity while reducing international travel costs."

HFCL Infotel trials NextWave outdoor WiFi

HFCL Infotel, which provides telecomms services in Punjab, is conducting an outdoor WiFi network trial using equipment form NextWave Wireless.

NextWave's equipment is being deployed in the state capital, Chandigarh. The trial will measure the capacity, throughput and performance of NextWave's carrier-grade outdoor WiFi networking equipment and serve as the first step to upgrading HFCL's mobile broadband capabilities, introducing a new level of mobile accessibility and customer services to the region.

"HFCL Infotel believes in giving the best of services to the consumer on the most advanced and customer centric platform possible and the synergies with NextWave will help HFCL Infotel give to its consumers the next level of connectivity" said COO of HFCL Infotel, Mr GD Singh.

NextWave's WiFi base stations use the company's patent-pending xRF adaptive beamforming smart antenna technology, designed to boost subscriber performance and densities and reduce interference. NextWave claims that, with xRF technology, carriers can deploy fewer network devices and still provide greater range, capacity and coverage than competing solutions. Especially in densely populated cities like Chandigarh, this translates into significant and immediate CAPEX and OPEX savings.

HFCL is currently performing the test using NextWave MBW 2000 series micro cell base stations with dual-radio xRF-powered 802.11 b/g access, and MBW 1000 pico cell base stations, with single-radio xRF-powered 802.11 b/g access. The trial area extends over a square kilometre in Chandigarh, in a mostly residential area that covers more than 1000 subscribers. If the trial is successful, HFCL expects to expand network coverage throughout Chandigarh.

Bharti Airtel expands WiMAX net

Bharti Airtel has awarded Alvarion and new contract to expand its WiMAX network for business users across key cities in India.

In 2006, Airtel deployed its first WiMAX network across major cities of India for enterprise customers using Alvarion gear. It now plans to provide additional enterprise customers the advantages of the technology by offering last mile connectivity for MPLS/VPN/Internet leased lines and other data services.

Don Price, Director Technology of Bharti Airtel said: "Our deployment with Alvarion, the largest WiMAX pure player, offers our customers long-term business success and guarantees advanced services at competitive prices. These products are specifically adapted to the technical requirements in India and offer extended coverage for leveraging the opportunities that the fast growing Indian market offers."

Singapore

IDA announces new Intelligent Island initiatives

The Infocomm Development Authority has announced a number of new initiatives under the Government's ten-year infocomm masterplan "Intelligent Nation 2015" (iN2015), launched in 2006.

Last year the IDA announced an initiative called SME Infocomm Package that enables SMEs to purchase affordable infocomm solutions tailored to their needs and enjoy one-stop support. IDA has appointed three companies out of 31 proposals. It received 31 responses to a call-for-collaboration issued last year and has now appointed DP Bureau, iCELL Network, and SingTel to provide the SME Infocomm Package. IDA will also provide a subsidy to 5,000 SMEs who are developing a web presence for the first time.

The SME Infocomm Package will offer packaged solutions, one-stop customer support and affordable pricing across a range of IT applications and services, from broadband connectivity, office productivity tools, to sector specific applications like online reservation systems for F&B and mobile learning on demand for the education sector.

IDA has also initiated a \$20 million National Authentication Framework that will give consumers the choice of different authentication methods or devices, any one of which can be used to access multiple online services offered by both the private and public sectors. IDA plans to issue a CFC in the second half of this year to develop this nationwide authentication framework.

Last year, IDA said that Singapore was exploring a National Grid that will offer computing, storage facilities and software on a pay-per-use basis. Through a CFC IDA sought grid service providers who could help develop the National Grid. It has now announced the consortia led by Singapore Computer Systems, New Media Express and PTC System as the National Grid Service Providers, and says that by the end of 2008, SMEs will be able to look forward to a range of commercial Grid services.

It has also launched the Digital Marketplace Programme that, it says, will spark significant change for Singapore's digital media and entertainment sector. It will develop a trusted and conducive environment for firms to manage, distribute and trade digital media assets such as movies, video programmes, music and mobile content, through and from Singapore.

SingTel expands maritime satellite services

SingTel is extending its suite of maritime satellite services globally by contracting 5MHz of capacity on SES New Skies' NSS-7, NSS-703 and NSS-5 satellites under a three year deal.

The satellites will also support demand for SingTel's OfficeAtSea@SingTel suite of maritime VSAT services which enable vessels to communicate with their headquarters on land. Services include 'always-on' unlimited broadband Internet access, email, VoIP, GSM onboard and ship surveillance. These are claimed to "overcome the limitations of traditional maritime communications by allowing the ship to become a seamless extension of the shore-based office."

NSS-7 at 338° east provides coverage of Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and the Americas. NSS-703 at 57° East provides cross-connectivity for Europe, Africa and Asia. Its coverage includes a global beam, and two C-band hemispheric beams, which cover Africa and the triangle from the Middle East to Japan and Australia, including all of India and China. NSS-5 is SES New Skies' principal connectivity satellite for the Pacific Ocean Region. Located at 183° East it is one of the few satellites that can connect North America with all major destinations in the Pacific Rim.

Malaysia

Telecom Malaysia and Numix plan satellite broadband service

A partnership between Telekom Malaysia and Numix Engineering has contracted 5MHz of transmission capacity on the New Skies NSS-6 satellite to launch two-way Ku-band broadband services for Malaysia and other countries in South East Asia.

Numix Engineering was established to provide local expertise in the supply and system integration of high technology products and the provision of their associated specialised engineering and support services for broadcasting, telecommunications, multimedia, defence and other related high-tech industries in Malaysia.

Managing director, Abdul Razak Bin Mohd Noor, said: "Numix Engineering as system integrator for TM's two-way Ku-band satellite broadband service will be responsible for the capital investment, transponder leasing, installation and operation of hub and remote terminals. In return, TM will provide sales and marketing support to the Numix managed services on NSS-6."

Telecom Malaysia group CEO, Dato' Zamzamzairani Mohd Isa, said the service would offer "affordable communication that is capable of providing voice, fax, data and high speed broadband connectivity nationwide, especially in remote areas not covered by TM's fixed infrastructure. In addition to that, this partnership will enhance the utilisation and growth of TM's future aspirations in the domestic market, in terms of broadband internet penetration."

Johor State Gov't picks Cisco for unified comms

The Johor State Government has chosen a Cisco unified communications system including more than 1,000 Cisco IP phones to meet the voice, video and data communications needs of state government employees in the Johor State New Administrative Centre (JSNAC) in Nusajaya.

The system will be deployed by Cisco Gold Certified Partner HP and MysysNet. Cisco networking equipment was also used to provide connectivity for Johor State under the Johor Electronic Government (JEG) Phases 1 and 2, with the project management undertaken by MysysNet.

"We initially did not consider Cisco as a provider of our telephony needs, but after seeing from Cisco, HP and MysysNet what unified communications can do to enhance collaboration, we knew we needed to go with their solution. Cisco equipment is at the heart of the Johor State network infrastructure, which also made it much easier for us to deploy and maintain the solution," said Cik Ruzana, systems analyst for the Science, Technology and ICT unit for the Johor State Government.

Japan

NTT's tech division joins Juniper's Junos app program

NTT Advanced Technology (NTT-AT), a company that represents the technological core of the NTT Group, has joined the Juniper Networks Open IP Solution Development Program (OSDP).

Membership gives NTT-AT access to the Partner Solution Development Platform (PSDP) that provides a set of resources, including a software development kit (SDK) with intelligent and secure interfaces to Junos routing and service functions, and technical and business support enabling customers and partners to develop specialised applications on Juniper's Junos software.

According to Juniper, by building on top of Junos software, customers and partners can save time and money in application development and in the deployment and ongoing operations costs of the solution.

"The nature of technology innovation is shifting to highly reliable and reasonable IP networks," said Toshikatsu Izumi, executive director, network technology centre, NTT-AT. "PSDP accelerates the speed of innovation for deployment of rich services and integration of applications, which enables us to respond to customer-specific demand in a more timely and effective manner."

"Technology innovation is shifting toward more open and creative collaboration between partners," said Takeshi Akaike, project manager, broadband network system, NTT Network System Service Laboratory. "By securely opening the development of Junos software with the PSDP, Juniper enables us to accelerate the development of advanced applications. PSDP is a unique and effective platform for research and development of cutting-edge network technologies."

Taiwan

Alvarion and ITRI demo mobile WiMAX handover

WiMAX developer, Alvarion, says that it and the Industrial Technology Research Institute have demonstrated handover between WiMAX base stations at up to 80km/hour.

The tests, conducted by TRI in Hsinchu campus, took place with VoIP, video streaming, IPTV and document exchange applications at data rates exceeding 12Mbps. Equipment used included Alvarion's 4Motion equipment and 802.16e BreezeMAX radio access network.

Testing also included the expansion of network coverage throughout the Hsinchu Science Park, National Chiao Tung University, and National Tsing Hua University. According to Alvarion, "A very high performance was maintained over 18 sectors along 6km of road with seamless sector and base station handover at up to 80km/hour and enhanced user experience."

Dr. Paul Lin, vice president, ITRI said, "The impressive results shown at ITRI labs are evidence of Alvarion's 802.16e capabilities and added value for providers and consumers. Alvarion's Open WiMAX architecture is what promotes an operator-centric and multi-vendor complete ecosystem, which will enable local Taiwanese manufacturers a competitive place in the expanding Mobile WiMAX market."

Taiwan's government selected the WiMAX technology for its M-Taiwan national program. ITRI and the WiMAX Forum established the M-Taiwan WiMAX Application Lab (MTWAL) - a proof-of-concept (PoC) lab at the ITRI campus in Hsinchu - to test and develop mobile WiMAX applications. Alvarion was selected as the sole supplier of WiMAX equipment for the lab because, it claims, it was the only vendor able to meet ITRI's timeline and stringent requirements for mobile WiMAX equipment.

Bangladesh

Free wireless broadband net access for all schools

AlwaysOn Network Bangladesh (AONB), a joint venture between Oregon-based AlwaysOn Network and an organisation of non-resident Bangladeshi technologists, is offering free wireless Internet access to Bangladesh primary schools and colleges, and "competitively priced" broadband services to underserved rural and urban areas.

The new nationwide telecommunications infrastructure is part of an agreement between AONB and the Bangladeshi government, in which the company will help

bridge the digital divide and deliver high-speed wireless Internet service to education, government, private businesses and individuals across the country.

It will use Soma Networks' broadband wireless technology which, according to Soma, "was found to outperform all other wireless access methods, making it the ideal technology to surmount the challenging deployment and environmental conditions in many regions throughout Bangladesh...During rigorous live field trials in the capital city of Dhaka, AONB customers found the wireless broadband Internet service to deliver superior indoor, non-line-of-sight connectivity even during the most severe weather conditions, including frequent tropical storms."

AlwaysOn Network deployed Soma's technology in 2002, when it launched services in the rugged, mountainous terrain of the US Pacific Northwest where inclement weather is also a major concern for service providers. This was Soma's first US deployment.

"We were already very familiar with Soma technology through our US deployment so the company was the natural choice as our equipment provider in Bangladesh," said Dr Reaz Shaheed, CEO and managing director of AlwaysOn Network Bangladesh. "Our vision is to offer the highest quality broadband Internet services throughout Bangladesh in order to make business opportunities more attractive to foreign companies seeking low cost, broadband dependent operations.

"To do this, the nation needs to grow its qualified workforce. By providing free wireless Internet services to connect every school and college in Bangladesh we can make the best educational resources available to everyone. Soma's ability to provide, integrate and validate a complete broadband wireless solution quickly, along with the best service coverage, has proven invaluable and will accelerate the realisation of our vision."

AONB signed a MoU with the Government of Bangladesh to provide inexpensive Internet service throughout the entire country as well as free Internet access to all primary schools over the next 10 years. One of the main objectives of this agreement is to offer broadband services at a cost suitable to the existing local economy. These services are designed to accelerate the expanding economy and act as a catalyst for future development and overall growth of Bangladesh.

Based on the success of the early trial, AONB has been awarded exclusive connectivity with select universities and hospitals in Dhaka. Following the completion of the initial deployment, the network will expand to other cities and rural communities starting in the third quarter 2008.

Soma's FlexMAX broadband wireless system operates in the 700MHz band and is claimed to deliver: approximately five times better penetration than any other wireless service; unrivalled non-line-of-sight access; the easiest subscriber self-installation and activation and industry-leading sector coverage and capacity with multi-megabit data rates; and continuing customer care via the Internet or telephone.

NTT DoCoMo buys in Bangladesh mobile carrier TMIB

NTT DoCoMo is to acquire a 30 percent stake in Bangladeshi mobile phone operator TM International (Bangladesh) Limited (TMIB).

NTT DoCoMo will acquire all stock in TMIB held by AK Khan Co Ltd. and its four group companies. The deal, worth \$US350 million, is expected to be completed by the end of 2008.

DoCoMo says it will participate in TMIB's management and actively draw on its expertise to enhance the company's business in the fast-growing Bangladeshi mobile telecommunications market.

New Zealand

Broadband ISPs' performance laid bare

Broadband services are sold on three parameters: speed, download quotas and price, but there are many other factors determining the overall quality of the service and the user's experience. And in New Zealand the performance of different providers has for the first time been laid bare for all to see.

The revelation comes in the first of what will be regular quarterly reports from New Zealand trade watchdog the Commerce Commission. The Commission has hired UK based Internet performance monitoring specialist Epitiro, backed up by IDC, to measure the quality of service provided by New Zealand's ISPs. When the deal was announced last November, Epitiro claimed that the Commerce Commission would be the first regulatory body in the world to use this kind of service.

To compile the report, Epitiro has measured thirteen ISPs every fifteen minutes on a 24/7 basis across eleven sites in Auckland, Hamilton, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin. Performance is evaluated on eight key performance parameters which impact the end user's broadband experience. They are:

- Synchronisation speed: the speed at which the customer modem connects to the ISP. It represents the maximum speed at which their connection is able to operate;
- Time to Connect: this measures the average time that it takes for an ISP to recognise a broadband modem and connect it to the network after it is turned on;
- Cached HTTP: the cached HTTP download speed test indicates how quickly an ISP can distribute content over the New Zealand portion of their network by testing how fast specific web pages are downloaded;
- Non-cached HTTP: this test provides an estimate of the user experience in downloading web pages from foreign locations;
- Ping performance: this is a measure of how quickly the ISP's network can respond to a request: it is a measure of latency.
- DNS test: this test records the time taken to resolve a fully qualified domain name to a corresponding IP address;
- Email round trip: this test measures the time taken for an email to be sent over the Internet using the ISP's mail servers;
- Packet loss performance: this test records packet loss during all the individual tests as well as overall packet loss while the tests were being run.

The second-tier ISPs consistently outperformed the city average, occupying between two and four of the top five places in each centre. MaxNet took second place in Auckland and Wellington, Snap was number two in Christchurch and Compass was second-ranked in Hamilton and Dunedin. A standout feature of Auckland's broadband performance was that four of the top five ISPs were smaller, 2nd tier service providers.

While TelstraClear DSL took the lead with a score of 3790, 42 percent above the Auckland average, MaxNet, KiwiOnline, Inspire and WorldExchange all achieved outcomes that were up to 28 percent above city average.

However the report notes: "These outcomes must be seen in context. Epitiro-IDC believes a key factor is that small Tier 2 ISPs have relatively uncontended networks with few users at any one time. Many have a dedicated focus on smaller higher-value audiences. By comparison, Vodafone, Telecom, Slingshot and Orcon have much larger and rapidly growing subscriber bases, leading to heavier network loading and contention. This has a particular impact on Telecom, given that it has over 60 percent retail broadband market share.

"Another factor is that in the three main centres a number of Tier 2 ISPs were only measured at one central city site, whereas the top five ISPs were measured at three sites including suburbs."

Overall, in the March quarter, TelstraClear Cable, TelstraClear DSL and Orcon recorded the top outcomes. TelstraClear took leadership in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch where it has its own cable and DSL network, while Orcon was the top performing ISP in Hamilton and Dunedin. However both service providers had mid to below-average outcomes outside of these cities.

Other leading ISPs achieved only average or below average results, and reported a wide variation between their highest and lowest city scores ranging from 20 percent (Vodafone) to 86 percent (Telecom). In Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch, Telecom's results were between 26 percent and 32 percent below each city's average. Vodafone and Slingshot both achieved similar outcomes that were consistently mid-range to below average across all cities.

This is only the first such report. Epiro-IDC says the index will evolve to compare results on a quarterly basis and that it will also provide qualitative insight into ISP investment plans and outcomes, providing the picture behind the data.

Telephone numbering in NZ to be reviewed

New Zealand's Commerce Commission has issued the terms of reference for a study into telecommunications numbering.

Telecommunications Commissioner, Dr Ross Patterson, said: "Significant changes in the market, and rapid development in technology, have prompted the need for this study. We want to ensure that the management of this critical resource adequately meets current and future demands of industry and consumers."

The study will identify international best practice models for number management and the potential application of those principles in New Zealand.

Telecommunications numbers in New Zealand are administered by an industry body in accordance with the terms of the Number Administration Deed (NAD), signed in 1999. The parties to the NAD are themselves reviewing the structure and principles of the NAD, and the Commission's study will be undertaken with their assistance. The Commission expects to deliver the final report in September 2008.

Pan Asia

OECD members agree on the future of the Internet economy

OECD member nations, meeting in Seoul, have issued a declaration committing them to work together on a very broad range of initiatives to evolve and secure the Internet as an underpinning of global commerce.

They have agreed to tackle the impending shortage of Ipv4 addresses by encouraging the adoption of IPv6, "in particular through its timely adoption by governments as well as large private sector users," and to "reduce malicious activity online through reinforced national and international co-operation among all stakeholder communities in their steps for effective prevention, protection, information sharing, response, business continuity and recovery."

Their joint declaration was also signed by a representatives of the European Community and ministers from Chile, Egypt, Estonia, India, Indonesia, Israel, Latvia, Senegal and Slovenia. According to the OECD, it affirms their commitment "to working together to stimulate innovation, competition and investment in information and communications technology. Their ultimate goal is to build confidence in and secure the future of the Internet economy."

OECD secretary-general Angel Gurría said: "Given that this infrastructure has become critical to our economies and societies, we should all engage in developing better, more broad-based, governance arrangements and policies." And he called for a new approach to drawing up these policies. "A more decentralised, networked approach to policy formulation for the Internet economy that includes the active participation of stakeholders."

Need for ongoing dialogue

He noted that it had been 10 years since the landmark Ottawa OECD Ministerial Meeting on E-Commerce, an interval which he described as "an eternity in Internet time" adding that. "a more permanent dialogue is needed to advance the issues we have discussed and that cannot occur if we only sit down to talk about the importance of the Internet every ten years."

He noted that the new declaration contained a commitment by signatories to review it in three years and said: "I pledge today the OECD's support for another meeting of this kind, should countries find it necessary and timely."

To aid any future discussion, the OECD has committed to improving statistical indicators to measure access and use of the Internet and its networks in order to provide more reliable data and analysis, notably of the impact of the Internet on economic performance and social well-being.

In his closing remarks Gurría said: "What is very clear from our discussions is that the Internet economy is becoming a key driver of the economy as a whole. Policies affecting the Internet can no longer be seen as narrow sectoral policies having to do with telecommunications, but as mainstream economic policies reflecting the fact that the Internet has become a fundamental economic infrastructure. Given that this infrastructure has become critical to our economies and societies, we should all engage in developing better, more broad-based, governance arrangements and policies... Foremost we need to better understand the role and contribution of the Internet and related ICTs as drivers of productivity and economic growth.

"Central to this is analysing the increasingly important role of the Internet in the innovation process which is lowering barriers, broadening collaboration and the exchange of ideas – the essence of innovation. The OECD needs to better understand this as a key element of its work to develop an Innovation Strategy – a project launched at the Ministerial Council Meeting of the OECD in 2007. Hand-in-hand with this analysis is the need to improve statistical systems to track changes in, access to, and use of, the Internet and related ICT networks."

The full declaration is available at <http://www.oecd.org/>

\$US375,000 grants for Asia Pacific ICT projects

A number of leading industry players have joined forces to launch a new grants program for the Asia Pacific ICT community.

The Information Society Innovation Fund (ISIF) is a joint initiative between the Canadian International Development Research Centre (IDRC), the Internet Society (ISOC), and the Asia Pacific Network Information Centre (APNIC), aimed at stimulating creative solutions to ICT development needs in the Asia Pacific region. It is also sponsored by the DotAsia Organisation, the registry

operator for the .asia top level domain.

It provides grants of up to \$US30,000 per project to help advance local and regional projects aimed at introducing, improving, and applying Internet and other digital communications technologies for the benefit of Asia-Pacific users and communities.

According to APNIC director general Paul Wilson, "innovative projects, such as the ones funded by ISIF, are a significant driver to Internet and technology growth in our

region. APNIC encourages members of the Asia Pacific ICT community to submit their projects for consideration."

ISOC president and CEO, Lynn St Amou, added: "ISIF helps ensure that local knowledge and experience is directed at tapping the potential of ICTs to address real-world problems with creative, innovative solutions."

Richard Fuchs, chair of the ISIF Grants Committee and regional director at IDRC, Southeast and East Asia, added: "In Asia Pacific the Internet and the mobile phone development are on different trajectories. We hope the ISIF research fund can help illuminate and address the new 'digital divergence' in our region."

Project proposals from Asia-Pacific based public or private sector organisations, university or research and development institutions, and non-government organisations will be considered. Applications must be aligned with ISIF program objectives, selection criteria and administrative guidelines. Individuals are not eligible for grants.

Applications are due 1 September 2008. A total of \$US375,000 will be available for grants in 2008. Grants will be made on a competitive basis and successful applicants will be required to make project details, outcomes and findings publicly available. Details at www.isif.asia.

Alcatel-Lucent & SpeedCast to offer hosted DVB-H

Alcatel-Lucent and SpeedCast - a satellite service provider operating in over 35 countries in Asia Pacific, Middle East and Africa - have announced plans to jointly market, deploy and operate a shared, hosted DVB-H platform for mobile TV operators in Asia.

The two companies say they will leverage their respective technologies, infrastructure and content delivery solutions to provide operators around the region with a state-of-the-art DVB-H head-end.

"This hosted service, jointly operated by Alcatel-Lucent and SpeedCast, will enable mobile TV service providers to deliver more than 20 TV channels via satellite (in the Ku-band or in the C-band) to their transmission towers for terrestrial broadcast (in the UHF band) to DVB-H handheld devices...[It] combines all the elements required for a successful mobile TV service including the service platform, a security and encryption technology, the platform for encoding into a DVB-H compatible format, the satellite delivery to terrestrial infrastructure and a very large number of TV channels with world-class content - across the major genres spanning news, music, sports, lifestyle and entertainment - which can be customised for different ethnic audiences."

They claim that it will allow operators to drastically reduce the capital and operational expenditures associated with mobile TV service, and to leverage the economies of scale offered by a centralised platform, and will ensure a much faster time-to-market.

"For cost-conscious mobile TV service operators, the key advantage of adopting a hosted approach is to avoid having to invest in head-end infrastructure, and therefore be able to concentrate their infrastructure investment on gradually increasing the density of their DVB-H or DVB-SH terrestrial transmission networks," said Frederic Rose, Alcatel-Lucent's president of activities in the Europe, Africa and Asia region. "By teaming-up with SpeedCast, Alcatel-Lucent is committed to allowing traditional as well as green-field operators accelerate their mobile TV delivery anywhere in Asia."

Pacnet & Bharti Airtel interconnect MPLS nets

Pacnet and Bharti Airtel have signed an NNI (network-to-network interface) agreement to interconnect their respective networks, and expand their respective MPLS IP-VPN capabilities.

"As we continue to see high growth in enterprise communication requirements to and from India...This partnership will help strengthen our reach across all major business markets within India as well as provide customers with industry-leading communication solutions," said Pacnet CEO, Bill Barney.

"This agreement is in line with our strategy to extend the global reach of our customers and providing them a secure, consistent and robust network running right from their doorstep to the most populous markets across Asia Pacific and beyond. Airtel's India expertise coupled with Pacnet's international capability will enable us to provide integrated communications solutions to satisfy requirements for quality, value, consistency and reliability," noted David Nishball, president of enterprise services, Bharti Airtel.

Bharti Airtel has pops in 125 cities in India and almost 74,000 kilometres of optic fibre cable covering all major cities in India. Pacnet owns and operates EAC-C2C, Asia's longest submarine cable infrastructure at 36,800 km, with a design capacity of 10.24Tbps.

Huawei and AlcaLu neck and neck in IP DSLAM market

Communications market research firm Infonetics Research says that Huawei took the lead from Alcatel-Lucent in worldwide IP DSLAM port market share in 1Q08, and is now less than one point behind Alcatel-Lucent for IP DSLAM revenue share.

Infonetics' report, *Broadband Aggregation Hardware and Subscribers*, shows, however that most IP DSLAM vendors were down in 1Q08, resulting in a 12 percent revenue decline in the overall segment. "2007 was the peak for annual IP DSLAM revenue as market saturation and substitution with multiservice access platforms (MSAPs) take their toll on this category," Infonetics said.

"MSAPs will see growth primarily in emerging markets such as India, as service providers increase deployments to support triple play services," said Mark Showalter, directing analyst for broadband networks at Infonetics Research."

According to Infonetics, the overall broadband aggregation market is down 11 percent sequentially to US1.2 billion in 1Q08 and faces long term decline as two of the four main component systems (ATM DSLAMs and next-gen DLCs) are at the end of their life cycles. Alcatel-Lucent remains the number one revenue leader in the overall broadband aggregation hardware market, followed by Huawei, ZTE, and then Nokia Siemens.

Technology

Kyocera's iBurst standardised as 802.20

The iBurst wireless broadband technology could get a new lease of life following its approval as an IEEE standard after long delays.

A few years ago the 802.20 broadband wireless technology was touted as a serious rival to mobile WiMAX, and to 3G broadband, but it was left for dead thanks to a dysfunctional IEEE working group. Now, out the blue, the IEEE has announced finalisation of the standard, and Kyocera, the principal technology backer of iBurst claims that the new standard is the iBurst technology. However few details are available. The working group is scheduled to meet next July, but the agenda was not available.

Thanks to the differing positions of Intel and Qualcomm on the working committee and the tactics being employed, the IEEE suspended work on 802.20 in mid 2006 and, in October 2006, in a bid to break the deadlock took the drastic step of dismissing every member of the working group and appointing a new bunch. That alone did not fix the problem: a year later the IEEE rewrote the voting rules of the group. And there has been no news of progress since, so this week's announcement came as something of surprise.

The IEEE Standards Board approved creation of the IEEE 802.20 in November 2002 with the mission to develop the specification for an efficient packet based air interface optimised for the transport of IP based services for business and residential end users and able to support data rates above 1Mbps for mobile users at vehicular speeds to 250 km/hr. The original plan was to complete the work by November 2004. A key advantage claimed over both WiMAX and 3G was that 802.20 was designed from the outset, uniquely, to use IP which had been cobbled in to 3G and WiMAX.

Early backers had high hopes

An early backer was Flarion Technologies. Back in 2005 it was claiming that its pre-802.20 wireless technology would offer services at costs an order of magnitude below 3G technologies. It suffered a major blow when US carrier Sprint rejected its technology in favour of WiMAX, but clearly had something going for it because Qualcomm bought the company for \$US600m and became a highly active supporter of 802.20.

Qualcomm's role in the 802.2 working group was highly controversial, and it is not clear how close the approved standard comes to its goals - if it is indeed iBurst the answer is probably 'not very'.

Qualcomm has made no comment on the news, but is no friend of WiMAX. A ComputerWorld US report published shortly before the 802.20 standard announcement said: "Qualcomm would seem unlikely to join efforts to stimulate WiMax and has expressed interest in another high-speed wireless specification known as 802.20, said Craig Mathias, an analyst at The Farpoint Group in Ashland, Mass. 'Qualcomm is not interested in making it easy for WiMax,' he said."

Mobile WiMAX is running later than anticipated and its prospects in many markets are being seriously undermined by the rampant success of HSPA. So there may be a new window of opportunity for 802.20 if it can offer sufficient performance and or cost advantages over WiMAX.

Kyocera bullish on iBurst

'The IEEE statement was followed by an announcement from Kyocera claiming that: "having been a draft standard since January 2006...iBurst has finally been approved as an 802.20 standard by the IEEE." Masashi Yano, general manager of Kyocera's corporate communication system equipment division, said: "With this industry standard approval, we are expecting to expand the iBurst service area to more and more countries."

According to Kyocera iBurst has already been approved as a standard by American National Standards Institute (ANSI) and International Telecommunication Union Radiocommunication Sector (ITU-R). It claims that "iBurst has remarkably high capacity, essential for mobile broadband wireless access services, and distributes its high data rates to many mobile PC users. This is enabled by field-proven Adaptive array antenna (AAA) and spatial division multiple access (SDMA) technologies."

The first commercial network in the world was launched in Sydney in March 2004 by Personal Broadband Australia, now part of Commander Communications. Today there are networks in nine other countries and an international iBurst Association

advocating the promotion and development of iBurst as a preferred mobile broadband technology (<http://www.iburst.org>).

Commander was unable to provide any comment on the latest developments at press time, and the iBurst Association website had not even got around to reporting the news at press time! However another iBurst operator, iBurst Africa, said: "This approval enables the ISP to operate an open platform which makes it possible for the iBurst technology to be shared publicly.

"The publication of IEEE 802.20...will enable other technology manufacturers to develop and deploy the technology globally...iBurst Africa believes that this standard approval will ensure that their customers and prospective customers will further enjoy the benefits of low-cost, always-on, and truly mobile broadband wireless network."

The technology was developed originally by ArrayComm, a company founded by Martin Cooper, widely regarded as the father of cellular radio, but is now being driven primarily by Kyocera. Cooper told ExchangeAsia in 2005 that ArrayComm was working very hard to make iBurst part of 802.20 but admitted that progress was very slow and very political.

Ericsson claims first 10Gbps GPON

Ericsson has demonstrated, at NXTComm08 in Las Vegas, what it says is the world's first 10Gbps GPON system: the Ericsson EDA 1500, with four times the bandwidth of existing GPON systems.

The doubled capacity of the 8-port GPON board means the EDA 1500 optical line terminal can now serve more than 7100 homes. Deployments will begin in early 2009. However, the 10Gbps GPON system will not be available commercially until the technology standard is defined.

Colin Goodwin, strategic marketing manager networks for Ericsson Australia said: "The EDA 1500 now has the greatest GPON switch capacity and port density in the market [and] 10Gbps GPON is now shown to be deliverable over the same fibre cables that are used to support today's 2.5Gbps GPON."

Alcatel-Lucent publishes *Breaking the Barriers* volume 2

Alcatel-Lucent has published the second volume of its reference work on the transformation of fixed broadband access - Breaking the Barriers: Transformation to the Digital Life.

It containing more than 40 articles, claims to "bundle the expertise and insights of some of the most recognised and innovative players in the telecoms industry" and to be company-agnostic.

Alcatel-Lucent says that, in the 18 months since it published the first volume of *Breaking the Barriers*, the broadband market has changed dramatically. "A year and a half ago, for example, operators were still looking at options for evolving their broadband access networks and had only just begun to offer IPTV packages. Since then, IPTV has reached mass-market momentum and many operators have started to implement concrete "fibre access" strategies. An updated and re-evaluated vision on operators' broadband access strategies had thus become a requirement." The publication is available only in hard copy. Free copies can be request at <http://www.alcatel-lucent.com/breakingthebarriers>.