

Pipeline's 2012 Innovation Awards

By Jesse Cryderman

Innovation isn't just a buzzword for communications service providers (CSPs) operating in today's rapidly evolving, highly competitive global market. Innovation is a necessity. Informa Telecoms & Media predicts mobile data demands will spike ten-fold over the next five years, while operator revenues will only grow two-fold, and non-core data service revenues will drop more than 25 percent. CSPs simply must do things differently to remain relevant and profitable.

Pipeline's Innovation Awards have been intentionally designed to identify and highlight the most innovative communications technologies and companies in the industry. The awards are the most objective and credible of their kind-- providing recognition and an endorsement from those who are most familiar and impacted by advancements in communications technologies. This year, the 2012 Innovation Awards program was far-reaching, thoroughly vetted, and judged by key executives from leading service providers and influential members of the analyst community. Contestants competed in 10 categories of innovation, and the winners were presented with a coveted ComIT trophy, shown above.

Initially, well over 50 companies were nominated including service providers and technology providers alike. Nominations came in from all sources: some companies were nominated by partners, others by their customers. Some companies nominated themselves, and Pipeline nominated a select few companies it saw as being truly innovative, as well.

From there, the playing field was narrowed to 20 finalists through an extensive review and evaluation process. The finalist's award submissions were passed on to the exclusive industry Judging Panel for voting and ultimately the selection of winners. This year, the industry Judging Panel was comprised of an esteemed consortium of key executives from leading service providers around the world such as AT&T, BT, Cox, Intelsat, TELUS, Turkcell, and Yota, as well as influential industry analysts.

The 10 categories for this year's Innovation Awards were: Product Innovation, Technical Innovation, Innovations in Networking, Advanced Connectivity, Cloud Innovation, Innovations in CEM, Best Deployment, Best Ecosystem, Most Innovative Company, and Editor's Choice. All finalists were truly representative of the edge of innovation in the industry today, making the selection of winners quite



difficult. In fact, the winners of half of the award categories were decided by a single vote.

"The competition and quality of the submissions was high and I have found it very interesting to see the innovative approaches folks have chosen to take forward their solutions," said Jason Cook, Chief Architect & CTO, Consumer Packaged Goods and US & Canada, BT Global Services. "These selections have been hard decisions and I personally would like to pass my 'well done' to all of the submitters regardless of their final placing."

On to Dublin

The Innovation Awards Gala began with a cocktail hour (Fig. 1) at the Westin in Dublin, Ireland, allowing contenders, judges, and Pipeline staff a chance to catch up, network, and enjoy a pint or three of Guinness (yes, it is better in Ireland). While cocktail hour progressed, the ornate Banking Hall next door was prepared for dinner (Fig. 2). Lights were dimmed, candles were lit, and a harpist was ushered into the landmark room that was built in 1863.



Fig. 1 (left to right) - Tim Young, Pipeline; Dmitri Lozdernik, Microsoft; Harlan Vold, Yota

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Fig. 2 - Originally the Bank of Dublin, the historic Banking Hall at The Westin Dublin serves as the perfect backdrop for Pipeline's 2012 Innovation Awards.

And the Award Goes to...

Following the mouth-watering first course of gnocchi with duck confit, the harpist paused and Pipeline Editor-in-Chief Tim Young began the awards presentation ceremony (Fig. 3).

In the Product Innovation category, Subex and JDSU were neck-and-neck finalists. Subex advanced its award-winning ROCWare Capacity Management solution, and JDSU advanced its Packet Portal solutions and micro-probe technology. Judges recognized ROCWare's paradigm shifting platform, moving capacity planning, management, and analysis from a deep traffic pattern focus to an end-to-end resource consumption focus. PacketPortal decentralizes network management from "big-iron" networks probes and enables a fundamental shift in the way networks are managed and even conceived of. The voting was extremely close, but in the end, JDSU took home the trophy.



Fig.3 - Tim Young, Editor-in-Chief of Pipeline begins the awards presentation.

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The Technical Innovation category was another close race, with JDSU, Ontology Systems, and Tekelec all in the running as finalists. While Tekelec's Diameter Signalling Router and JDSU's Packet Portal solution received high marks, ultimately Ontology's semantic search platform, Ontology 3, came out on top. Ontology 3 applies patented semantic search technology, and an agile search approach, to replace the prevalent and expensive integration tasks that underpin significant OSS applications and business processes. The real-world transformation project success and significant time reductions realized by Ontology 3 in systems integrations played a major role in garnering Ontology Systems the winning vote.

In yet another close contest, Innovations in Networking saw finalists Tail-f Systems and InfoVista angling for the award for network innovations and advancements in network technologies. InfoVista's Vista360 product provides CSPs with ubiquitous access to network and application performance data via a flexible, easy-to-use, self-service dashboard, while Tail-f's Network Configuration Server relies on network abstraction to streamline and configuration and provisioning in multi-vendor environments. Both entries represented significant innovation, but after the final tally, InfoVista won by a narrow margin.

Alvarion and Orga Systems were the finalists in the Advanced Connectivity category, an award given for championing the enablement of new connectivity models. Alvarion's 4Motion portfolio is driving connectivity in smart communities and smart grids--certainly innovative territory--but Orga Systems came out on top with their OS.Automotive product, a cross-industry collaboration and innovation in M2M and connected vehicles.



Andreas Freund, Orga Systems with Paula Zimmerman, Pipeline

The award for Cloud Innovation, which encompassed SaaS, PaaS, IaaS, ITaaS, hosting, data center, virtualization, and all other cloud-related technologies, came down to a neck-and-neck race between finalists Redknee and Transverse. Both companies entered the race with cloud-driven billing solutions, with Redknee advancing a real-time converged billing and customer care solution based on the Windows Azure public cloud, and Transverse advancing TRACT, an innovative SaaS-based, real-time subscription and usage-based rating and billing solution. In the end, Transverse was selected winner by a single vote.

CEM may be a buzzword in some circles, but it's also fertile territory for innovation, as finalists in the Innovations in CEM category, Subex and Comptel Corporation, handily revealed. While Subex's Vision360 component of their RocWare provides an impressive level of detail and analysis of the customer experience, ultimately Comptel walked away with the award for its Customer Engagement Solutions. Both entries delivered a compelling view in real-time of the customer experience across multiple domains, but some of the real-time monetization aspects of Comptel's solution likely gave it the extra votes needed for the win.

CSG International and Orga Systems duked it out for first place in the Best Deployment category. CSG International's Singleview has been deployed by many global operators, and the underlying innovation that drove successful transformations within these deployments was clearly noted. However, Orga Systems dramatic results achieved in a successful deployment with Ukrainian operator Life:) (Astelit) pushed Orga into the winners circle making Orga the only contestant to take home the trophy in multiple categories.

The unique category of Best Ecosystem was established to recognize a company whose partner ecosystem creates, fosters, and promotes true innovation. After parsing through many competitive entries, the contest came down to two industry heavyweights: Microsoft and Cisco. For the judging panel, this was no easy task. Cisco is a pioneer in the development of ecosystems, while Microsoft is the new partnership ecosystem champion in the communications industry. Cisco's long-standing commitment to ecosystem cultivation is well documented, and consequently their partner network has grown over the years, to more than 4,000 partners. Microsoft is rapidly growing their ecosystem, innovating with a pre-configured set of systems that enables a "[mashable ecosystem](#)." In Dublin, it was Microsoft who got the final nod, perhaps in part because they boast 640,000 partners today.

"The awards provide me with a unique insight into the technical innovations that address many of the real-world issues we are facing today."

The competition for Most Innovative Company was perhaps the most intense, again resulting in a narrow race decided by a single vote. This award was established to recognize a company whose DNA was rooted in innovation, and whose organizational culture clearly reflected their commitment to embracing innovation. Finalists Tekelec and SAPO (Portugal Telecom) were both quite capable of receiving the crown. Portugal Telecom has become a leader in mobile content delivery, and their "OPEN" program industrializes the innovation process to great success. However, Tekelec's extensive patent portfolio and pioneering innovation in Diameter Signaling, Policy, and M2M converged to win the award by one vote.

Judge Craig M. Clausen, Executive Vice President & Principal Analyst, New Paradigm Resources Group, Inc., commented on the awards process, and the innovation displayed by all of the finalists. "These awards play an important role in the industry because they give us the opportunity to formally evaluate the impressive forward movement the industry has made--movement driven by the innovative companies being recognized now by Pipeline," said Clausen. "The importance of these companies, who are all at the cutting edge of communications technology, can't be overstated."

Finally, the Editor's Choice award was created to allow Pipeline's seasoned editorial staff to recognize one company that stood out from the rest for its innovation. This selection process was also very close, boiling down to a heated debate between several contenders, including Tail-f, Subex, and Tribold. In the end, Tribold nudged out the other contenders based on the strength of their product catalog functionality and how their collaborative product modeling capabilities is both a critical component to innovation and how it has spurred additional innovations.

Judge Harlan Vold, Chief Technology Officer at Yota, expressed enthusiasm regarding the Innovation Awards. "I was very happy to be a part of Pipeline's 2012 Innovation Awards and was impressed at the level of innovation shown by all the finalists," said Vold. "The awards provide me with a unique insight

into the technical innovations that address many of the real-world issues we are facing today.”

Pipeline could not be more pleased with the 2012 Innovation Awards program. It provided everyone involved--from the solution providers, to the editorial staff, to the judging panel--a deep look into the very best the industry has to offer. The exquisite Awards Gala in Dublin was a fitting celebration for the Innovation Awards, and Pipeline looks forward with anticipation to the 2013 Innovation Awards.

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