

Telecom Industry News

By: Jim Schakenbach

Several technology trends continued to gather steam this month, including all things virtualized, 5G, and security-related developments. Also, it was a big month for corporate movers and shakers, with several high-profile mergers and acquisitions.



Technology Talk

Network function virtualization remains red hot. **Telco Systems** and **Silver Peak** introduced a joint [plug-and-play vCPE SD-WAN solution](#) to provide telcos and managed service providers with the flexibility to quickly roll-out and monetize new tiered VNF managed services. This open solution also enables telcos and MSPs to deliver on the ultimate promise of NFV to be an agile, open, and flexible service delivery platform that supports any VNF service in parallel to or as part of a service chain with SD-WAN services.

Cloudify announced the recent launch of its new [virtual networks function \(VNF\) management platform](#) which carriers are now using to configure and deploy VNFs in days rather than weeks or months. Cloudify 4 allows carriers to move from VNF concept to production faster using open source tools.

Cloudify wasn't the only NFV platform to announce changes. **Ensemble**, a division of ADVA Optical Networking, launched a major upgrade of its [NFV platform](#) with key enhancements for telco-scale virtualization. The high-performance software-based product suite has been specifically optimized for the simple, low-cost deployment of universal customer premises equipment (uCPE) solutions in a cloud-native fashion.

SevOne, in collaboration with **Red Hat** this month, unveiled a new [network functions virtualization \(NFV\) solution](#) that leverages the advanced virtualization of network functions from Red Hat's NFV solution with the automation of assurance and performance from the SevOne platform. This offering is designed to enable communication service providers (CSPs) to implement and operate an NFV-based infrastructure, and gain greater insight into their virtual network services and cloud infrastructure.

In other CSP platform news, **Radisys** and **Calix** announced that they are delivering the industry's first [turnkey Residential CORD \(R-CORD\) platform](#) designed for deployment in service providers' last mile networks and enabling them to accelerate service introduction while balancing deployment, upgrade, and maintenance costs.

This month **Sprint** unveiled the Sprint Magic Box, the world's first [all-wireless small cell](#). Sprint Magic Box is a new plug-and-play LTE small cell for businesses and consumers that dramatically improves data coverage and increases download and upload speeds on average by 200 percent. The new technology enables Sprint to very quickly and cost-effectively densify its nationwide LTE Plus network and provide an improved customer experience.

5G News

From all the recent talk about 5G, one would think the technology was already well-established. However, it is yet to be fully realized, as developers, carriers, and network and device OEMs

continue to innovate in anticipation of the new technology being fully embraced by CSPs, businesses, and consumers.

5G is set to empower citizens and businesses with [widespread ultra-fast connectivity](#) and innovative new services. In Europe this month, the **European Commission** and industry players have set ambitious plans to launch by 2020, in the context of a global race to make the most out of 5G. The technology and regulatory requirements were set out in the European Commission's "5G Action Plan" as well as in the industry's "Manifesto" for timely deployment of 5G in Europe. Both documents identify spectrum reform as the main pre-condition to a timely roll-out of new 5G networks and services. Spectrum measures in the Code have been identified as one of the major pro-investment aspects of the on-going telecom reform.

Here in the U.S., **T-Mobile** has announced its plan to deploy the nation's [first nationwide 5G wireless network](#) in all spectrum bands after taking the lion's share of the 600 MHz spectrum during the FCC's recent auction. On top of expanding and strengthening its LTE coverage, the carrier announced it will use a portion of its \$8 billion mother lode of low-band 600 MHz spectrum to deliver 5G coverage from coast to coast.

Viavi Solutions is introducing a [new base station analyzer](#) that is designed to help service providers quickly test 5G IoT infrastructure overlays on mobile networks. The company's new CellAdvisor Base Station Analyzer will support the unique signal analysis required for 5G narrow-band Internet of Things (NB-IoT) connectivity. Viavi believes it is the first of its kind in the industry to meet the needs of service providers for immediate testing of the overlay IoT infrastructure that must co-exist seamlessly with the traditional mobile communications network. Viavi is introducing this upgrade following successful trials with Tier-1 global service providers and collaborations with major network equipment manufacturers.

To help service providers embrace digital transformation and more quickly implement 5G capabilities, **Netcracker Technology** has introduced a [new digital transformation development platform](#) to help service providers accelerate the adoption of 5G, IoT, biometrics, and artificial intelligence in virtual and cloud infrastructures.

Corporate Moves

Carriers, cable companies, and solution providers were all busy this month buying, selling, and partnering with each other.

One big piece of news was the talk that [T-Mobile and Sprint may be getting together again](#). Recent statements indicate that the two carriers and their respective parent companies **Deutsche Telekom** and **SoftBank** are in early talks about joining forces. Sprint tried to buy T-Mobile in 2014, but the deal fell apart in the early stages because regulators weren't interested in further consolidation in the wireless business. But President Donald Trump's more business-friendly stance opens the door to a potential deal. A combination would create a larger third player to compete against **Verizon Wireless** and **AT&T**, by far the No. 1 and No. 2 carriers in the U.S.



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In the meantime, **Straight Path Communications** dumped **AT&T** for Verizon. Straight Path

announced that it was signing a [definitive merger agreement](#) under which Verizon Communications Inc. would acquire the company for \$184.00 per share in an all-stock transaction that is intended to qualify as a tax-free reorganization. Verizon will pay on behalf of Straight Path a termination fee of \$38 million to AT&T.

Cisco announced [plans to acquire](#) privately-held cloud-based SD-WAN solutions provider **Viptela, Inc.** to expand Cisco's software-defined wide area network portfolio for telecom carriers and global enterprises. Customers are turning to SD-WAN solutions to help manage and orchestrate their WAN deployments, to cost effectively improve access to both the cloud and their corporate network. Cisco will acquire Viptela for \$610 million in cash and assumed equity awards. The acquisition is expected to close later this year, after having completed all of the customary closing conditions and regulatory review.

Seventh-largest U.S. cable service provider **Cable ONE** has completed its [735 million dollar acquisition](#) of cable operator **NewWave Communications** which provides high-speed data, video and voice services to residential and business customers throughout non-urban areas of Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri and Texas. The all-cash \$735 million acquisition was originally announced on January 18. The combination of Cable ONE and NewWave creates a leading high-speed data and cable company serving more than 1.2 million primary service units in 21 states and expands Cable ONE's footprint into additional non-metropolitan markets for which the Company has optimized its strategy and operations.

Security Update

Security concerns continue to occupy consumers and businesses alike. **Flash Networks** announced a [new network-based security solution](#) that it claims seamlessly integrates into mobile operators' network policy to answer the need of MNOs to provide subscriber protection. Flash Networks xtraArmor, is a client-less mobile threat detection and prevention solution that integrates seamlessly into mobile operators' network policy, expressly answering the needs of mobile operators.

DNS security and services solutions provider **Nominum** launched its [new DNS-based Security-as-a-Service solution](#) sold through ISPs and telecom operators to protect public and private Wi-Fi networks from ransomware, phishing, and other cyberthreats. The new cloud-based DNS security solution is being offered as a network-based service by internet service providers to protect their enterprise and small-and-mid-sized business (SMB) customers against the damage caused by cyberthreats. The carrier-class solution also secures retail locations, stadiums, transit centers and other venues where public Wi-Fi networks enable guests and their devices to stay connected.

Consumer cyber security company **Bullguard** announced the launch of its [new consumer cyber-security solution](#) that the company claims delivers enterprise-grade comprehensive smart home security against cyber-attacks. The product was developed to address growing consumer use of the Internet of Things and increasing cyber-security concerns for the billions of connected Internet of Things devices on the market today – from smart alarms, thermostats, and baby monitors to smart appliances, lighting, locks and more.

Verizon Enterprise Solutions launched a [new Software-Defined Perimeter \(SDP\) service](#) that enables enterprise customers to proactively identify and block cyber-attacks by creating a virtual boundary around their network. The scalable Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) solution provides pre-authenticated, context-aware, secure access to enterprise applications. The service works by isolating communications between enterprise applications and end-user devices, enabling rapid identification and prevention of network-based cyber-attacks such as denial of service, connection hijacking, and credential theft.

With the rising concern over IoT security, it comes as no surprise that a [new report](#) released this month by **Scrutinise Research and Analysis** finds immediate action is needed to avert potential catastrophic fallout from IoT security breaches. The new "Securing the Internet of Things" report, published jointly with technology content marketing agency **Ilex Content Strategies**, highlights the security risks present in the Internet of Things and recommends a four-pronged approach to prevent

security breaches, including built-in product security, consumer education, international IoT standards and best practices, and improved government regulations and penalties for non-compliance.

Rep. Marsha Blackburn (R-Tenn.), Chair of the **House Subcommittee on Communications and Technology**, this month introduced the [BROWSER Act](#) (H.R. 2520) to address privacy policies in the wake of the Privacy Congressional Review Act that was signed by President Trump on April 3. The bill requires companies that are providing broadband internet access service (BIAS) and edge services to give users notice of their privacy policies, obtain opt-in consent for sensitive data, and opt-out consent for non-sensitive data. Sensitive information includes financial, health, info pertaining to children under age 13, SSN, geo-location info, content of communications and web browsing history.

A new **FICO** survey released this month reveals that fraud managers at major banks in the Asia Pacific region regard telecommunications companies as the [second largest target for cyber data breaches](#) and threaten to stop doing business with telcos if they fail cyber-security audits. The survey indicated that large retailers were viewed as the greatest data breach risk (84%) in 2017, with telecommunications companies ranking second (70%). Half of all respondents reported their cyber-security budget increased at least 10 to 25 percent over the last twelve months in response to growing data security threats.

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