

## Telecom Industry News

By:

August brought plenty of news in network evolution. INCOMPAS made two FCC filings to continue to promote healthy competition and innovation in building fiber, while efforts to expand networks into rural and unserved areas of the U.S. continued. Strategic partnerships to advance connected and self-driving cars were announced, and a new range of routers for first responders debuted. Newly released research showed Google Assistant is gaining on market leader Alexa, and that cybercrime is predicted to affect 146 billion consumer records within the next five years.



The top stories from the month are summarized below. To view all the news as it breaks, check out *Pipeline's* [News Center](#) or [subscribe](#) to receive our news summary each week.

## Network Evolution

Advocacy for the future of broadband was major news this month. [INCOMPAS submitted two FCC filings](#) in response to the USTelecom Forbearance Petition to continue to advocate for the future of fiber deployment and promote competition that benefits consumers. The INCOMPAS effort includes two economic studies demonstrating that competitors many times smaller are building more fiber than incumbents and counters the AT&T-led effort to raise prices and cut off competition.

In other stateside fiber news, [Great Lakes Energy has tapped Calix](#) to accelerate GLE's Truestream fiber network initiative and expand its fiber network over the next 8-10 years. The initiative will bring advanced services—gigabit Internet, voice, and managed whole-home Wi-Fi—to GLE's members in northern Michigan, aided by Calix's Vantage Support Service. In Virginia, [Shenandoah Telecommunications Company \(Shentel\)](#) announced the addition of significant multiyear contracts for wide area networks and dedicated Internet access for schools and libraries throughout the state. To enhance and supplement its existing fiber in the Los Angeles metropolitan area and the surrounding Southern California region, [Crown Castle](#) announced a multimillion dollar investment over the next year. To provide broadband Internet access to nearly 300,000 people living in rural regions of upstate New York and Maine, [RTO Wireless and Microsoft](#) will be collaborating under the Microsoft Airband Initiative. The goal is to extend broadband access to two million people in unserved portions of rural America by July 4, 2022.

And in Oklahoma, [Windstream](#) will be bringing faster broadband speeds—up to 100 Mbps—to 900 locations in Poteau with fixed wireless technology. When the project is complete, nearly 9,000 locations in the area will qualify for fixed wireless broadband. Windstream also launched a new campaign for its [Kinetic by Windstream brand](#). The campaign highlights the company's network investment and continued commitment to delivering premium broadband speeds to an increasing number of customers.

[Charter Communications](#) announced the introduction of its next-generation Spectrum Wi-Fi router featuring 802.11ax technology. Charter is the first U.S.-based broadband provider to introduce the next-gen wireless standard, which increases Wi-Fi speeds, allows for more concurrently connected devices and better battery life for those devices, and improves Wi-Fi coverage in the home.

Across the Atlantic, BuddeComm's Telecoms Maturity Index (TMI), which analyzes countries' broadband, mobile and fixed line markets alongside a range of economic metrics to rank and

compare, revealed European market leaders in maturity. The three top-ranking TMI scores in Europe belong to Denmark (98), Estonia (94) and Sweden (91). Updates rolled in from southern and eastern Europe. In Bulgaria, [Vivacom and Ericsson](#) have teamed up to deliver high-definition voice services via 4G Voice service (Voice over LTE) and Wi-Fi calling services. To speed adoption of LoRa™ low-power, wide-area networks across the entire Adriatic region, [Kerlink and Croatia-based AdriNet](#) have joined forces. The agreement will deliver Kerlink's products and services and covers smart city, smart energy, smart agriculture and smart industry applications in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Hungary, Serbia and Slovenia. In additional Ericsson news, Ericsson Radio System has also been tapped to help Play expand its radio access network in Poland. The agreement between [Play and Ericsson](#) also includes Operation Support System (OSS) components with Ericsson Network Manager.

In news from the southern hemisphere, [Gilat Satellite Networks announced that Telstra](#), a leading global telecommunications and technology service provider, has chosen Gilat's backhaul solution to expand 4G mobile service in remote locations throughout Australia. In Brazil, [Gilat has entered a partnership with Hispasat](#) to commercialize the latter's Ka band satellite capacity, an endeavor that has an estimated potential revenue of tens of millions of dollars over the coming few years. In other updates concerning Brazil, Coriant's 200G optical transmission technology has been deployed by [Copel Telecom](#) to scale its fiber optic backbone network in the country's state of Parana.

## IoT News

Developments in IoT this month included progress toward self-driving cars and advancements in artificial intelligence (AI). [Ericsson and Audi](#) have embarked together on a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to explore 5G's potential as a future-proof communication technology to meet the demands of automotive production. Experts from both companies will run field tests in a technical center of the Audi Production Lab in Gaimersheim, Germany. [Ericsson has also been selected by KPN](#)—a leading telecom and ICT provider in the Netherlands—to explore 5G's use for self-driving cars and applications to increase traffic safety at the Automotive Campus in Helmond, Netherlands. [Adesto Technologies](#) announced this month that it will present new research on Resistive RAM (RRAM) technology's potential for use with high-reliability applications in automotive and IoT. The presentation will take place at the ESSCIRC-ESSDERC 48th European Solid-State Device Research Conference, held in Germany in early September. And, international automotive technology provider [ERM Advanced Telematics](#) launched StarLink Tracker, a versatile telematics product integrating advanced vehicle tracking, driver behavior monitoring, theft prevention, Bluetooth, Wi-Fi and 4G cellular capabilities—all in a single device.

[Telit](#), a global enabler of IoT, will power a new range of routers for first responder communications from Centrix IP. These powerful, durable, portable devices will operate in cellular band 14, the frequency licensed to the First Responder Network Authority to create a coast-to-coast U.S. wireless broadband network for the public safety sector.

In AI news, [research from Ovum](#) offered a view of the current landscape of AI assistants. Ovum reports that while Amazon's Alexa is the current market leader, Google Assistant is catching up fast, posing a threat to Alexa's supremacy. Siri, Cortana, and Bixby offer specific advantages for particular use cases but lag behind Alexa and Google Assistant—with diminishing chances to get ahead, considering the fast-growing functionality and interoperability concerns in the smart home sphere. In domestic AI innovation news, [Accelirate](#) has launched a new automation accelerator program. RPA90X is designed to fast-track companies' automation initiatives by identifying processes to show immediate return of man-hours back into the business. It was developed when the company observed difficulties in progress for automation in Fortune 1000 businesses. Across the Atlantic, [Telenor, NTNU, and SINTEF](#) have joined forces to establish a new Norwegian AI Lab to promote progress.

Advances in strategic partnerships made news this month. [Quantenna Communications and Aerial Technologies](#) entered a strategic partnership to bring the latest in Wi-Fi motion detection technology to the market. In more partnership news, [DataXoom and Samsung SDS America](#) will collaborate to transform the Samsung smartwatch, via custom developed applications, from a

device for consumers to a purpose-built tool for enterprise use. And [Tri Cascade](#), an IoT technology company that is a subsidiary of SkyFidelity, announced a new partnership with Skydrop, a pioneer in smart sprinkler controllers. As a result, Tri Cascade will use its NB-IoT technology to enhance SkyDrop's current smart irrigation system—and SkyDrop's solution will be integrated into Tri Cascade's suite of interconnected IoT smart neighborhood technology.

[Samsung and Xiaomi](#) reported record-setting quarters after each shipping 9.9 million smartphones to India last month—the best period either vendor has had in the country.

## Customer Experience

In customer experience news, [Quantenna Communications](#) announced a breakthrough in mobile performance, with 1Gbps throughput achieved between Quantenna-based access points and a wireless adapter based on the Intel Wireless-AC 9260. [Mosaic Telecom has tapped the full power of Calix Cloud](#) to deliver an exceptional subscriber experience while increasing ARPU and take rates, boosting service uptake by 80 percent. And, [according to J.D. Power](#), overall U.S. network quality continues to improve year-over-year, with Verizon leading in wireless network quality in all six regions covered by the study. Results were published in the 2018 U.S. Wireless Network Quality Study, Vol. 2 and measured call quality, messaging quality and data quality.

## The Road to 5G

Developments on the road to 5G came in from around the world this month. In domestic news, [Verizon has announced that Indianapolis](#) is the fourth city selected to receive 5G residential broadband service by the second half of 2018. The city joins Houston, Los Angeles, and Sacramento as the first in the country to receive service. In another significant milestone, [Sprint and LG](#) confirmed they are working together toward delivery of the first mobile 5G smartphone in the US. Delivery is targeted during the first half of 2019, with additional details and specifications to come. [Ericsson](#) announced an increase in its U.S. footprint through the expansion of its 4G partnership with Verizon. This extended partnership includes Ericsson Radio System 4G LTE equipment which, in addition to enabling the latest advances in 4G LTE capabilities, will provide a 5G-ready platform that will allow Verizon to rapidly transition sites to 5G when service is deployed in those markets.

Additionally, application and bidding procedures have been set by the [FCC for the upcoming November 14](#) US 5G spectrum auction. The auction will cover Upper Microwave Flexible Use Services licenses in the 28 GHz (27.5-28.35 GHz) and 24 GHz (24.25-24.45, 24.75-25.25 GHz) bands.

In Europe, [Ericsson announced that Hi3G](#) has selected it to modernize Hi3G's Denmark transport network with 5G-ready routers over the next three years. This modernization will prepare Hi3G's network for future 5G requirements as well as support the increasing number of connected devices on the network. Additionally, [Vodafone Spain](#) announced the acquisition of 90 MHz of contiguous spectrum in the 3700 MHz band for mobile data services. Purchased in the Economic Ministry's auction for a cost of just under 199 million euros, the 3700 MHz spectrum will be used to deploy 5G services, enabling Gigabit speeds and lower latency to enhance applications for connected vehicles and robotics, industrial automated systems, and virtual and augmented reality.

In the Middle East, [Etilasat and Ericsson](#) successfully conducted a live on-air trial of Ericsson Radio System and Massive MIMO technology. The trial, which furthers preparation for 5G deployment, was conducted in the dense and high-traffic urban environment of Dubai Marina in the United Arab Emirates.

## Cloud

[Windstream Enterprise](#) announced the launch of SD-WAN Cloud Connect, a flexible, high-

performance way for enterprises to connect all their network locations to their cloud-based applications. SD-WAN Cloud Connect is offered in collaboration with VeloCloud, now part of VMware. In other enterprise cloud news, [AT&T Edge Solutions now includes Cisco's](#) Enterprise Network Compute System (ENCS) virtualization platform. Over in Europe, [Orange](#) announced the completion of its 100 percent acquisition of Basefarm, a leading European player in cloud-based infrastructure and services, to support Orange's enterprise cloud offering.

In other cloud developments, [Aricent and CableLabs](#) are collaborating on a self-managed and optimized virtual infrastructure platform on the Kubernetes and the Docker container model. [BullsEye Telecom has launched VirtualTech](#) to remotely diagnose and solve intermittent and chronic telecommunication network issues. [Mist is partnering with VMware](#) to create a seamless AI-driven wireless LAN (WLAN)/WAN network experience to provide unique LAN, WAN, and cloud visibility and facilitate troubleshooting into user network experiences.

## Cybersecurity

[Juniper Research's](#) new report, released this month, is a sobering read on rises in cybercrime and the increase in breaches. *The Future of Cybercrime and Security* predicts that over 33 billion records will be stolen by cybercriminals in 2023 alone. This number represents an increase of 175 percent over the 12 billion records expected to be compromised this year. The predicted cumulative loss over the entire period from 2018 to 2023 is 146 billion records—a staggering number with significant economic impact worldwide.

To combat the stress and financial impact of international Wangiri fraud and scam calls, [Vodafone UK](#) has taken steps to protect its customers. It will now protect customers by blocking these widespread calls before they even reach its users. [Meta Networks has joined the Symantec Technology Integration Partner Program \(TIPP\)](#) in a collaborative effort to combat cybercrime and secure its cloud network-as-a-service.

## Innovation

New initiatives to enhance innovation were revealed this month. [Spirent](#) announced its companywide "Promise. Assured." business initiative to leverage its proven innovation to pursue emerging technologies and new industries and extend into service provider and enterprise networks. Spirent will focus on assuring customer performance and revenues with solutions for 5G, lifecycle service assurance and analytics, and cybersecurity and explore new business opportunities in virtualization, autonomous vehicles and automotive. [Swiftpage](#), the provider of Act! CRM software, announced the launch of its Small Business Idea and Invention Scholarship, a new program that will award \$2,500 to a student who submits an idea, invention, or app that helps small business owners grow their businesses and run them more efficiently. [Microsoft](#) has selected the eight winners of its third annual Airband Grant Fund to help bring broadband internet access to rural communities. Winners include CvWireless, Skylark Wireless, Tribal Digital Health, Numbers4Health, Mesh Power, Cold Hubs, Agsol, and ME Solshare.

Another new study from [Juniper Research predicts blockchain deployments](#) will enable banks to realize savings of over \$27 billion in cross-border settlement transactions by the end of 2030—a reduction of more than 11 percent per on-chain transaction.

[Infobip](#) is launching a new communications channel—WhatsApp Business—that enables enterprise communications for WhatsApp, which has 1.5 billion users in 180 countries. The early access launch will onboard businesses and financial institutions gradually through a review process.

## Video and Entertainment

[Consolidated Communications](#) is the first provider to partner with Philo on streaming service

featuring live TV, DVR and on-demand services with entertainment, lifestyle and knowledge programming. Philo service will be available to all Consolidated Communications customers and can be viewed anywhere on any Internet-connected device. Philo carries programming from A+E Networks, Discovery, Scripps Networks, HGTV, HISTORY, Lifetime, TLC, Travel Channel and more. The [Korea Content Platform](#) (KCP), a joint venture between Korea's three leading broadcasters, is celebrating the one-year anniversary launch of its Internet subscription service, KOCOWA, which streams the most popular Korean television programs on-demand in the United States.

The [Federal Communications Commission](#) announced proposed rules in August to implement a recent Congressional directive to reimburse certain Low Power TV (LPTV), TV translator, and FM stations for costs incurred as a result of the Commission's incentive auction in 2012 under the new 2018 Reimbursement Expansion Act (REA).

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