Letter from the Editor

By: Scott St. John

What is a network? When you think about it, a network can be just about anything. Or perhaps better defined, a network is a group or groups of any interchangeable things. Networks can be comprised of people, equipment, highways, wires, computers, television programming, or even sewer systems. That's quite a broad range.

To further complicate matters, *how* those groups and things are connected is also significant; as the connectivity between the parts of the network is integral to how the network is able to function.

The evolution of the network relates to every single component. The interconnected things, the method by which they connect, and the capabilities — collectively or independently — that the network and its parts can perform. But perhaps, where we are today lies within the question itself — "what *is* a network?" Or, the fact that we quite legitimately should be asking ourselves that very question now.

Today, the interconnected things are changing. Some things are being virtualized while billions of new physical things are being added to the network. The way networks communicate is evolving. Networks can communicate directly, wirelessly, and autonomously. The way we communicate to and through the network is transforming. Facial recognition, biometrics, and natural language processing are being adopted at a blistering pace. New capabilities are being created and discovered. New use cases — such as self driving cars, virtual and augmented reality, and remote surgery — are being implemented and the full scope, magnitude, and impact is yet to be uncovered.

In this issue of *Pipeline*, we explore the topic of Network Evolution. We look at how enterprises can embrace new digital technologies such as NFV and SD-WAN. We look at how businesses can capitalize on and achieve a competitive advantage through cloud-connected communications. We learn how communications service providers (CSPs) can leverage open RAN technology, how broadband providers can evolve, and about a new framework that can help CSPs transform to contend with changing competitive threats. We hear from MEF and Broadband Forum on new frameworks and advances in 5G. All this, plus the latest news and information around trending topics and more.

We hope you enjoy this and every issue of *Pipeline*.

Scott St. John
Managing Editor