Telecom Industry News

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This month's telecom industry news included a bumper crop of research updates and 'world-firsts' released in advance of Mobile World Congress 2019. Reports on the pace of 5G rollouts, the strength of consumers' desire for the technology, and key shifts in content consumption were among the headlines this month. The FCC released details on its efforts to combat spam and robocalls and outlined next steps in the ongoing battle, and AT&T and VITAS Healthcare launched a study on the use of virtual and augmented reality in hospice care.

The top telecom industry news 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 telecom industry news summary each week.

Network Evolution News

In a new report released this month, Dell'Oro Group projects that investments in cable infrastructure will reach $2 billion by 2023, with distributed, virtualized architectures set to transform cable broadband networks in fierce competition with fiber operators. This month, Broadband Forum released its latest Market Update, which notes that Gfast solutions certifications jumped to more than 40 as fiber deployment among operators increases.

Partnerships intended to advance network evolution were unveiled this month. Telserv has embarked on a new global bilateral partnership agreement with Telefónica International Wholesale Services (TIWS) to address new markets and better serve CSPs' strategies. Vodafone Italia and Telecom Italia have expanded their existing passive sharing agreement and signed an MoU to enter into an active network-sharing partnership for 5G rollout in Italy. In Africa, IX Reach has partnered with the Djibouti Data Center (DDC), selecting it as IX's hub for African network expansion as its new PoP. Ericsson has joined the O-RAN Alliance, which is committed to evolving radio access network architecture and orchestration built on openness, intelligence, flexibility and performance. In other forward-looking telecom industry news, Nokia and German service provider M-net have announced plans for the first field trial of probabilistically shaped wavelengths using Nokia Photonic Service Engine 3 (PSE 3) super coherent technology—setting a new milestone for the network of the future.

Network evolution solutions debuted, too. Infinera has launched The Infinite Network, an end-to-end network architecture to enable operators to scale their networks efficiently to support relentless bandwidth growth and meet the demands of 5G and other future technologies. Working with Fujitsu, Shaw has equipped its fiber network with significant capacity, scale, and agility—especially in urban areas—for more seamless connectivity via the Fujitsu 1FINITY™ platform and Virtuora® software. Infradata, a leading provider of cybersecurity and cloud networking solutions across Europe, announced it has delivered and implemented the BroadForward Multi-IMSI solution at Vodafone to enable sponsored roaming access to 700+ Vodafone partners in 230 global destinations. To advance service providers' ability to meet critical communication and first responder needs, Ericsson has launched a new critical communications broadband networks portfolio as land mobile radio communications increase. LogNet Billing, provider of the MaxBill Modern Billing solution for service providers, announced MaxBill's expansion into the online gaming industry. NetEnt, a leading digital entertainment company, has selected MaxBill for its

global online gaming operation. And Nokia launched its [FastMile 5G Gateway](#), which helps operators upgrading their LTE networks to capture new Fixed Wireless Access (FWA) revenue and accelerate 5G rollouts.

Network expansion news included updates from the [FCC](#), which is taking the next step in expanding broadband service to over 713,000 rural homes and businesses in 45 states via the successful Connect America Fund Phase II Auction by establishing a Report and Order. Domestic updates also included one from [Everstream](#) on expansion of its fiber network in the Midwest through greenfield builds. It will invest $300 million to add nearly 6,000 miles to its networks and build dense metro fiber networks in 12 markets. UK startup [Sky and Space Global](#) announced it has successfully raised $12 million in capital to fund its ability to provide affordable voice, data, instant messaging, M2M and IoT connections to currently unconnected people in the equatorial belt.

To successfully address the proliferation of mobile devices and increases in remote working, [TangoNetworks unveiled Kinetic Cloud Mobile-X](#), the industry's first global private mobile network for enterprises with distributed workforces. This Global Private Mobile Network is controlled exclusively by an enterprise, even one with a multinational workforce, rather than by operators.

Network innovation news came in from [Gilat Satellite Networks](#) with the announcement that it has been awarded a multiyear contract to deliver broadband connectivity in India to its mainland and islands. Gilat also [completed a successful test](#) demonstrating exceptional maritime connectivity over Telesat's Phase 1 LEO Satellite, an industry-first milestone for maritime applications requiring global coverage, exceptionally low latency and high bit-rate.

5G News

5G news was, predictably, much of the talk in the run-up to the start of Mobile World Congress 2019. Reports with insights on 5G rolled out. [Viavi Solutions](#) revealed new industry data demonstrating the pace at which 5G networks are rolling out worldwide, with 55 commercial 5G networks expected to be live before the start of 2020 — the year that 5G was originally expected to debut. The pace of commercial deployment is, according to Viavi, a clear indicator of the fierce competition to offer 5G services. New research released this month from [Transaction Network Services (TNS)](#) also reveals consumers' desire for 5G services: even though satisfaction rates are high for current mobile networks, 72 percent of US adults are aware of 5G and eager to upgrade to experience everything it may offer. In another newly released piece of research, [Nokia and Analysys Mason](#) have created the industry's first 5G Maturity Index Report, intended to guide operators on how to align technology investments with business objectives so that they can succeed in the evolution to 5G.

Trials were conducted in many corners of the globe. [Nokia and Zain Saudi](#) are partnering on a MIMO pilot in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia on the TD-LTE network using 2.6GHz spectrum to boost capacity and customer experience, further paving the way for 5G. [Vodafone UK, Ericsson and Qualcomm](#) are teaming up to conduct 'over the air' tests of a smartphone 'form factor' device and 5G technology as part of preparing for 4K video and 3d holographic calling-on-the-go. Vapor IO and partners Federated Wireless, Linode, MobiledgeX, Packet, and StackPath have teamed up to launch the [Kinetic Edge Alliance](#), which will advance edge computing at scale for the top 30 markets in the US.

[RAD](#), the industry leader in Service Assured Access, announced its ETX-2i-10G cell site gateway has been selected for two 5G rollouts by Tier 1 service providers in Europe. The operators will be able to support highly distributed content and applications with multiple classes of service for various end-to-end 5G slices.

In a multiyear collaboration to align ongoing 5G development efforts, [Ericsson and Intel](#) will jointly develop the next-generation software-defined infrastructure for the 5G era. Their intent is to deliver a new level of cloudlike agility, transparency and efficiency required for Network Functions Virtualization (NFV), distributed cloud, and 5G.

Cloud News

This month brought news of data center openings and expansions around the globe. In Chile, Flexenclosure completed a data center for global communications and IT provider CenturyLink. With it, CenturyLink will expand its data and cloud services portfolio for existing and new business customers, governments and carriers. Flexenclosure also announced the opening of a new data center in East Perth, West Australia in partnership with NEXTDC. HGC and Megaport are collaborating to deliver Multi-cloud Connect Service to corporate customers to connect them to leading global cloud service providers in over 380 enabled data centers. Stateside, 123Net, Michigan's premier data center services provider and host of the Detroit Internet Exchange (DET-IX), has tapped Telia Carrier's 100G-enabled global IP backbone to provide scalable capacity and connectivity to the Michigan market. The state currently has the most permissive self-driving car laws in the country and, with the entry of driverless cars into the market, data volumes and use will surge.

The debut of new solutions also made headlines. To help service providers with fully automated edge data center deployments, Kaloom has introduced Cloud Edge Fabric, the first fully automated data center network fabric with native support for network slicing along with embedded 5G user plane function (UPF). MYCOM OSI announced the release of Assurance Cloud, a carrier-grade service assurance SaaS. Assurance Cloud employs the latest cloud technologies to reduce cost, effort, and time to deploy service assurance systems for CSPs. Cloudify has debuted Cloudify Spire, the next generation of orchestration designed to connect and control distributed networks, devices, and applications all the way to the edge—end-to-end at scale.

In standards news, the ETSI Industry Specification Group (ISG) on Network Functions Virtualization (NFV) released the first version of its specification for the foundations of an open ecosystem where Virtualized Network Functions (VNFs) can be onboarded and managed by independently developed management and orchestration systems—a key objective for the standards body when it was launched in 2012.

IoT News

Vodafone released its latest IoT Barometer report this month. Among the research's findings: 34 percent of businesses worldwide now use IoT, with 95 percent seeing the benefits of IoT investment as the technology moves into the mainstream. In other IoT thought leadership news, Ericsson outlined next steps for the evolution of cellular IoT and launched new solutions that will enable service providers to address a larger part of the IoT market with diverse use cases across verticals including automotive, manufacturing, and utilities.

The Kudelski Group, a leader in digital security, and IDEMIA, a leader in augmented identity, have announced a global partnership that provides manufacturers and service providers a single, fully integrated solution to manage the network connectivity and security of cellular IoT devices. The companies will integrate Kudelski's IoT Security Platform into IDEMIA's DAKOTA IoT (eUICC) and TSM (Trusted Service Management) solutions to make sustainable IoT security more accessible and reduce time to market.

Nokia announced that MIRIS has selected its Nokia AirFrame Open Edge technology to deploy sustainable edge data center networks across the Nordic region. The deployment is a first in the enterprise market and will advance Smart City services. Nokia also announced the expansion of its WING offering with IoT applications for operators to address new vertical markets at Mobile World Congress 2019. Built on the Nokia Worldwide IoT Network Grid, the IoT infrastructure packages enable operators' rapid expansion into new vertical markets.

Security News

Brekeke released new software that introduced superior VoIP failover and disaster recovery to offer

seamless calling experience on SIP telephony systems.

To protect consumers from mounting illegal robocalls, the FCC issued a report this month detailing efforts to combat them and outlining potential next steps. The FCC has previously indicated that reducing SPAM robocalls is one of its top priorities to protect consumers.

M&A News

In highlights from Merger and Acquisition news, SAP has completed its acquisition of experience management (XM) software leader Qualtrics, accelerating the development of the new XM category by combining experience data with SAP operational data. Orange has acquired SecureData and its subsidiary SensePost. The acquisition bolsters Orange's international reach and expertise in cybersecurity, as SecureData is the largest independent service provider in the UK, with solutions designed to assess risks, detect threats, respond to security incidents, and protect customers' IT assets.

CX News

Riding the rise in AI use, Consolidated Communications has added a cloud-based virtual intelligent agent solution to its portfolio, intended to enhance customer experience by enabling businesses to better communicate with their customers. Calix has added GigaMesh wireless satellite to its Smart Home and Business solution, enabling CSPs to extend WiFi coverage throughout subscribers' homes.

In Mexico, VADSA has chosen MDS Global's end-to-end VNOnDemand solution to launch a new MVNO called Exis Telecom which will offer a real-time, wholly digital customer experience with content-based, application-based, and traditional voice and data packages.

Innovation News

As previously noted, February fairly bubbled with steady research and insights news. New findings from Juniper Research note a $23 billion increase for 2019 in digital content revenues, largely driven by sports rights acquisition by Amazon, Facebook, and Twitter. In another new report, Juniper also predicted that over 8 billion digital voice assistants will be in use by 2023, up from an estimated 2.5 billion at the close of 2018. Smart TVs, which will grow at over 100 percent every year from now through 2023, will drive much of the anticipated growth. In other telecom industry news, Openwave Mobility released its third annual Mobile Video Index, with insights into the 100 percent year-over-year growth of mobile video—and that it is projected to account for up to 90 percent of 5G traffic.

Advancements and new use cases brought interesting news. To assess a potential alternative approach to therapy for certain hospice patients, AT&T and VITAS Healthcare have launched a study combining 5G with virtual reality and augmented reality. Windstream and MOBITV announced plans to launch an app-based television service, Kinetic TV, which will enable Windstream's residential customers to access content when and where they want it, powered by the MOBITV CONNECT™ Platform.

Innovation that will benefit operators and providers included the addition of a new capability from Calix. The latest release of Calix Marketing Cloud includes machine learning with advanced behavioral analytics intended to help CSPs of all sizes identify at-risk subscribers and reduce churn. Ondas Networks has launched an innovation hub and multi-vendor ecosystem where mission-critical entities and technology providers in the utility, transportation, oil and gas and government security markets will have access to advanced edge computing and connectivity. Federos released its latest version of its Fusion1 software-defined operations platform with key enhancements including a single pane of glass, customizable dynamic dashboards in a new user interface, and fast integration capabilities.

[Ultra Mobile,](#) the nationwide carrier focused democratizing wireless communication, announced it is closing in on its target of one billion international minutes of calling within the last year as it expands its unlimited calling program to more than 80 destinations around the world.