Telecom Industry News

By: Scott St. John

This month's telecom industry news included an array of announcements. We heard about the growth of 5G connections worldwide, the predicted increase in the 5G backhaul equipment market, and the rate of expansion in the use of cloud infrastructures. In the US, the Federal Communications Commission continued the acceleration of 5G with the final rules for the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund and the full commercial deployment of the 3.5 GHz spectrum. Other news of product enhancements, alliances, R&D, and more rolled in. And, most notably, within two weeks of the event, GSMA canceled Mobile World Congress 2020 as a drove of companies withdrew over the threat of the novel coronavirus.

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.

5G News

A new study from Juniper Research predicts that the total number of 5G connections will reach 1.5 billion globally by 2025, rising from only 5 million in 2019. This is an annual average growth of 150 percent over the next six years. The research also forecasts that the US and South Korea will be the fastest adopters of 5G, with 75 percent of all 5G subscribers attributable to these two countries by the end of 2020.

In other industry news related to the acceleration of 5G momentum, Ericsson announced it will establish a new R&D site in France with up to 300 employees. This site will focus initially on 5G software development and security.

According to a new report by Dell'Oro Group, 5G mobile backhaul transport equipment revenue will reach $3 billion by 2024. Demand for 5G backhaul is expected to drive multiple years of growth for the total mobile backhaul transport market for the next few years.

Network Evolution News

It was a busy month globally for [Vodafone](#), which announced plans to accelerate the roll out of full-fiber broadband in the UK by restructuring its existing deal with CityFibre. The restructured deal will encourage CityFibre to build its fiber infrastructure more quickly and to more places. Currently, full-fiber broadband is available to only 11 percent of UK premises. In the land down under, [Vodafone Hutchison Australia](#) customers will soon have access to 5G thanks to a new partnership with Nokia. Vodafone will fast track its 5G delivery and switch on its first group of 5G sites in and around Paramatta in the coming months. The sites originally made up a test network which Nokia used to demonstrate its technology but are now set to become the first area of commercial coverage for Vodafone's 5G network.

Stateside, the Federal Communications Commission issued a [statement of support](#) after President Trump signed the Telephone Robocall Abuse Criminal Enforcement and Deterrence (TRACED) Act into law. The TRACED Act is a new anti-robocall and spoofing statute. FCC Chairman Ajit Pai also presented his colleagues with [final rules](#) to launch the new $20.4 billion Rural Digital Opportunity Fund, which was then officially established by month's end to begin a [two-phased process](#) to provide funding for the deployment of high-speed broadband in areas of the United States where there is currently not fixed broadband service that meets the Commission's minimum speed standard (25/3 Mbps). In addition, the FCC paved the way for full commercial deployment in the [3.5 GHz spectrum](#) by certifying access for four Spectrum Access System (SAS) Administrators.

[Seaborn Networks](#), developer-owner-operator of transoceanic subsea fiber optic cable systems, announced new high capacity connectivity from its Seabras-1 IP Network directly into key global IX locations including Amsterdam, Frankfurt, London, San Jose, Los Angeles, and Ashburn. In other Internet Exchange news, [DE-CIX,](#) operator of the world's leading IX by peak traffic in Frankfurt, Germany, announced its further expansion in Southeast Asia with a new Internet Exchange opening in Singapore in the second half of 2020.

[Consolidated Communications](#) announced its enhancement of SD-WAN, a software-based technology solution that optimizes network performance using the company's private network and gateways.

With 5G and Wi-Fi 6 on the very near horizon, the [Wi-Fi Alliance](#) is introducing new terminology to distinguish forthcoming Wi-Fi 6 devices that are capable of 6 GHz operation, an important portion of unlicensed spectrum that may soon be made available by regulators around the world. Wi-Fi 6E brings a common industry name for Wi-Fi users to identify devices that will offer the features and capabilities of Wi-Fi 6, including higher performance, lower latency, and faster data rates extended into the 6 GHz band.

In South Asia, [Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited](#) (PTCL) has deployed Nokia's technology to expand the capacity of recently installed 100G transport network to 200G optical network for both domestic and international traffic. This capacity expansion has been carried out in the major cities of Islamabad, Lahore and Karachi and with it, PTCL becomes the first operator in the country to deploy high-performance 200G 8 Quadrature Amplitude Modulation (QAM).

Leaderboard News

A major news headline this month was the cancellation of [Mobile World Congress 2020](#) in response to company pullouts over the potential threat of the novel coronavirus. Nearly 6 percent of attendees at the event come to Barcelona each year from China, and many operators and major global and market leaders elected to reduce risk to their staff, customers, and other stakeholders.

Partnership and strategic alliance news made headlines this month. AI company [Cerence](#) has signed a memorandum of agreement with LG Electronics (LG) to develop a new software solution that integrates LG's webOS Auto In-Vehicle Infotainment (IVI) system with Cerence ARK (AI Reference Kit), a new turnkey voice assistant for the automotive market. It also announced a new [collaboration with Microsoft](#) to integrate Cerence Drive products with the Microsoft Connected Vehicle Platform. [Deutsche](#)

Telekom has selected Vlocity to support its digital transformation in Europe. Vlocity's cloud software will be used to help Deutsche Telekom simplify buying experiences, accelerate time to market, and increase revenue through new communication and digital services. And Chayora Holdings Limited and Telstra International have entered a strategic partnership aiming to provide world-class colocation services and network connectivity from Chayora's hyperscale campus serving the Tianjin-Beijing corridor in the People's Republic of China.

A new study from Juniper Research has found that mobile operator voice revenue will drop to $208 billion by 2024 from $381 billion in 2019, as users continue to prefer more flexible and free OTT (Over-the-Top) services. Another new study from the research firm has found that the global number of roaming subscribers will reach 1.1 billion by 2024, rising from 900 million in 2020. This represents a growth of 28 percent over the next four years.

Microsoft announced AI for Health, a new $40 million, five-year program and part of the AI for Good initiative, that will leverage artificial intelligence (AI) technology to empower researchers and organizations addressing some of the world's toughest challenges in health.

DataBank, a provider of enterprise-class data center, connectivity and managed services, announced that Colony Capital has made a $185 million investment into DataBank to continue growth and expansion.

In Canada, Genwave Technologies announced the acquisition of GWI Telecom, the professional installation, testing and wireless services division of Mississauga, Ontario-based Gap Wireless.

Cloud News

A new study from AllCloud reveals that organizations are planning to expand their use of cloud infrastructure, and cloud-native technologies such as containers and microservices already have made significant footholds in corporate IT departments. The three most significant findings include that organizations are moving the majority of their workloads aggressively to the cloud; new technologies like containers and microservices are undergoing increasing adoption; and the top factors in choosing a platform remain security, reliability, and cost.

Network-as-a-Service platform provider PacketFabric announced updates to its hosted cloud connectivity product. It now offers capacity starting at 50Mbps and supports connectivity to Amazon Web Services (AWS) Transit Gateway, a service that enables customers to connect their Amazon Virtual Private Clouds (VPCs) and their on-premises networks to a single gateway.

Cloud news also featured partnership headlines. Konica Minolta and Google Cloud launched a new alliance this month. As Google Cloud's Premier Partner for the office technology industry, Konica Minolta will deliver its productivity and collaboration solutions. The relationship will also facilitate technical development of advanced productivity tools between the two organizations, all built on the Google Cloud. Microsoft Corp. and Genesys have expanded their partnership to provide enterprises with a new cloud service for contact centers that enables them to deliver superior interactions for customers. Genesys Engage on Microsoft Azure will be available in late 2020.

Customer Experience News

Returns of products purchased online generate five billion tons of trash and 15 million metric tons of carbon dioxide (CO2) annually. And while consumer behavior can contribute to this, the majority of online shoppers say it is the retailers' responsibility to address the environmental damage caused by returns, according to a new online survey conducted by The Harris Poll on behalf of Threekit, the product visualization software platform. Threekit has issued best practices as well as a challenge to Amazon and other eRetailers to reduce the number and frequency of product returns.

Security News

Cybersecurity and compliance company [Proofpoint, Inc.](#) released its sixth annual global State of the Phish report, which provides an in-depth look at user phishing awareness, vulnerability, and resilience. Among the key findings, nearly 90 percent of global organizations surveyed were targeted with business email compromise (BEC) and spear phishing attacks, reflecting that cybercriminals continue to focus on compromising individual end users. Seventy-eight percent also reported that security awareness training activities resulted in measurable reductions in phishing susceptibility.

[Proofpoint Inc.](#) also released its *Cost of Insider Threats 2020 Global Report* to identify the costs and trends associated with negligent, compromised, and malicious insiders. Notably, on average, impacted organizations spent $11.45 million annually on overall insider threat remediation and took 77 days to contain each incident.

Email and data security company [Mimecast Limited](#) announced the acquisition of Segasec, a provider of digital threat protection. With Segasec technology, Mimecast customers can better defend against attacks that leverage fake websites and domains for credential harvesting of their customers, employees, partners, and 3rd party vendors within their supply chains.

IoT News

[Sprint](#) announced that it is expanding its Curiosity™ IoT platform to customers in Australia as a result of its new relationship with Australia's largest mobile network operator, Telstra. The announcement is the first in a series of efforts by the company to enable international IoT solutions.

[Aptilo Networks](#) introduced Aptilo IoT Connectivity Control Service™ (IoT CCS), delivered as a service for mobile operators. It allows mobile operators to offer instant IoT service creation, with a service that lets enterprises define their own granular connectivity and security policies.