Telecom Industry News

By: Scott St. John

It was a busy month for partnerships in telecom industry news. Nokia initiated, renewed, or extended key global partnerships to roll out 5G networks in Europe; to complete a 5G standalone core network trial in Japan; and to improve the supply chain and economics of advanced optical connectivity solutions. The FCC authorized additional funding to expand rural broadband deployment over the next decade and released new data showing the closing of the digital divide. New reports from Juniper Research projected online fraud losses as well as the growing number of 5G IoT connections worldwide.

As the COVID-19 pandemic escalates in the US, the FCC and carriers took steps to boost connectivity and access. As of this writing, nearly 400 CSPs had taken the Keep America Connected pledge.

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

Nokia made several key announcements in 5G industry news in February and March. It was selected by Orange Slovensko, the leading operator in Slovakia, to prepare its Radio Access Network for 5G. This new commercial deal builds on long-term end-to-end network collaboration between Nokia and Orange Slovensko. Nokia has also provided the end-to-end 5G support for Softbank to complete the first 5G connected car trial at a Honda Research and Development site in Kamikawa-gun, Hokkaido, Japan. Nokia also announced that it will extend its long-standing partnership with French mobile operator Iliad Group to roll out 5G networks across France and Italy. The 5G deal will focus on network modernization and 5G introduction in France and 5G introduction in Italy, making 5G available to 17 million Iliad subscribers across both countries. It has also announced the launch of the Nokia Bell Labs End-to-End 5G Certification Program to offer professionals across the information and communications technology (ICT) industry two levels of certification in end-to-end 5G networks, from the basics to professional-level planning and design. Nokia also completed a 5G standalone core network trial with Japan's KDDI and, in collaboration with Telia and Telenor, has deployed the world's most advanced shared wireless network supporting a Multi-Operator Core Network (MOCN) feature, enabled for wireless technologies spanning 2G to 5G, located in Denmark.

Stateside, Samsung Electronics announced a commercial agreement with U.S. Cellular for 5G and 4G LTE network solutions. The new agreement establishes terms under which U.S. Cellular can purchase Samsung's commercially proven network solutions, including 5G New Radio (NR) technology, to help U.S. Cellular deliver next-generation service.

Several 5G partnerships percolated in the industry news. Infovista and iBwave are pooling their expertise in network planning and design in a strategic collaboration that will address the worldwide demand for accessible, end-to-end 5G networks. In another 5G partnership, Radisys Corporation and KDDI Research completed the world's first successful demonstration showcasing RAN slicing involving different traffic streams

with different latency requirements on a single Radio Unit (RU) connected to multiple Centralized Units/Distributed Units in a disaggregated network topology. Altran and 5TONIC, an open research and innovation laboratory of which Altran is a member, are collaborating on 5G mobile projects to improve the reliability and performance of advanced driver assistance systems (ADAS), the organizations announced this month.

Operators looking to leverage their fixed networks to deliver on the promise of 5G will soon have new tools at their disposal as Broadband Forum wraps up the development of two new standards intended to help provide a definitive deployment roadmap.

Finally, the Federal Communications Commission adopted new rules to auction and make available quickly and efficiently 280 megahertz of mid-band spectrum for flexible use, including 5G. Making this critical spectrum available represents another important step in closing the digital divide, especially in rural areas.

Network Evolution News

The FCC took steps to make additional spectrum available to AT&T, T-Mobile, Verizon and US Cellular to boost wireless connectivity during the coronavirus pandemic to accommodate the additional remote working, learning and communicating Americans are undertaking during social distancing. This special spectrum access was also extended to AT&T to serve Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands.

The Federal Communications Commission authorized more than $240 million in funding over ten years to expand rural broadband deployment in Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Massachusetts, Missouri, New York, Oklahoma, and Wyoming. These investments will connect more than 100,000 unserved rural homes and businesses in these states. Broadband providers will begin receiving funding later this month. The FCC's Office of Economics and Analytics (OEA) also released updated data showing that the digital divide substantially narrowed during the first two years of Chairman Ajit Pai's leadership. Specifically, from December 2016 to December 2018, the number of Americans without any options for at least 250/25 Mbps fixed terrestrial broadband service plummeted by 74 percent, from 181.7 million to 47 million. And during that same time period, the number of Americans with no options for at least 25/3 Mbps fixed terrestrial broadband service fell by 30 percent, from 26.1 million to 18.3 million.

Orange Business Services has chosen Ekinops and Dell Technologies as partners for a new universal customer premise equipment (uCPE) solution. This platform plays a key role in network transformation, including software defined networking (SDx), providing customers with increased business agility, flexibility and simplicity in service deployment.

Infinera and Corning Incorporated announced the achievement of delivering an 800 gigabits per second (800G) single wavelength with Infinera's sixth-generation Infinite Capacity Engine (ICE6) technology across 800 kilometers (km) on Corning's TXF® optical fiber. The trial demonstrates the benefits of a solution with superior fiber designed to help meet growing bandwidth demands for network operators from metro to subsea network applications.

AI News

A new study from Juniper Research has found that total operator spend on AI solutions will exceed $15 billion by 2024, rising from $3 billion in 2020. The research identifies network optimization and fraud mitigation solutions as the most highly sought-after AI based services over the next four years. AI-based solutions automate network functionalities including routing, traffic management and predictive maintenance solutions.

In related AI news, another Juniper Research report found that consumer retail spend over chatbots will reach $142 billion by 2024, rising from $2.8 billion in 2019—an average annual growth of 400 percent over the next four years. The research identified the retail sector as a key beneficiary of advances in NLU (Natural Language Understanding) technologies.

New AI-powered offerings were announced in telecom industry news this month. [ADVA](#) has launched the industry's first centralized GNSS monitoring and assurance tool. Using artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) for comprehensive predictive maintenance, it addresses the key concerns of GNSS users around the globe and protects networks from GNSS vulnerabilities, including jamming and spoofing attacks. [Ericsson](#) has launched two new AI offerings in its Network Services portfolio, Network Intelligence and Omni Network Channel. They employ AI, automation and predictive analytics to address the complex reality faced by communications service providers: exponential data growth and the continuous introduction of new technologies such as 5G, digital transformation, and scattered information sources and insights. In addition, [Ericsson](#) announced its selection by Japanese communications service provider NTT DOCOMO as its AI-based optimization solution vendor for its nationwide radio access network (RAN).

Cloud News

Partnerships dominated cloud news in February and March. [SADA and Google Cloud](#) have announced they are extending their partnership through a new, multi-year, $500 million agreement to drive adoption of Google Cloud's platform and technologies through SADA's expertise as a Managed Services Provider (MSP). [Synchronoss Technologies, Inc.](#) announced that it is powering AT&T Personal Cloud, a new service for AT&T Mobility wireless customers. The Synchronoss solution will integrate into a suite of selected AT&T services, using the cloud to vastly improve the subscriber's overall experience.

IoT News

A new study from [Juniper Research](#) charts the growth in 5G IoT connections and revenue: 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 6 years.

[Senet and Digital Matter](#) announced a partnership to deliver integrated, low-cost LoRaWAN asset tracking devices, platforms, and networks. Senet also announced a strategic go-to-market [partnership with T-Systems](#) for ready-to-use IoT solution bundles for commercial and industrial applications. Bannister Lake announced a [partnership](#) with data aggregator and distributor Roadify Transit to provide customers with access to international real-time transit information.

[Nuro](#), the robotics company that launched the world's first unmanned delivery service, debuted R2: its second-generation, custom-built vehicle, which was granted the first-ever exemption for an autonomous vehicle by the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

Security News

[Proofpoint Inc.](#) 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.

A new study from [Juniper Research](#) has found that businesses in eCommerce, airline ticketing, money transfer and banking services will cumulatively lose over $200 billion to online payment fraud between 2020 and 2024, driven by the increased sophistication of fraud attempts and the rising number of attack vectors.

Leaderboard News

Partnership and acquisition news rolled in during the period. [Nokia](#) announced that it has joined forces with CENGN and NORCAT to install and operate a private LTE/4.9G

wireless connectivity network in NORCAT's Underground Centre to continue to advance the future of mining worldwide. Nokia also announced plans to acquire US-based Elenion to improve the supply chain and economics of advanced optical connectivity solutions for 5G, cloud, and enterprise networking

Internet Exchange (IX) operator DE-CIX and the largest IX on the West Coast of Africa IXPN (Internet Exchange Point of Nigeria) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to kick off their new partnership.

Windstream announced a partnership with YouTube TV to provide Kinetic by Windstream customers with an affordable and innovative streaming solution for both live and on-demand content.

Swift Navigation, which focuses on GNSS positioning technology for autonomous vehicles, announced a partnership with Deutsche Telekom for a new precise position product offering.

Building on their existing alliance, Deloitte and Vlocity, Inc. announced that together they will apply the strength of their portfolios to accelerate 5G adoption and digital transformation for the media and entertainment industry.