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## IT & Telecom Industry News

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Though the New Year is behind us, *Pipeline's* newsroom continues to ping with top trends and predictions for 2021. We heard from the Federal Communications Commission on advancements in bridging the United States' digital divide. We also received a raft of new insights and predictive metrics from Juniper Research, Comarch, NordVPN Teams, Enea, and others on what forces and innovations will shape the year to come. This month, we also saw 5G begin rolling out at US airports, the first sliced FWA deployment, a partnership focused on advancing innovation in biomedicine, and developments to continue to transform operators' and service providers' businesses through BSS and other digital tools.



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.

### Mobility News

Mobility news this month included new reports capturing the state of mobile networking and innovation around the globe. In selected headlines, the [Federal Communications Commission](#) released its annual Broadband Deployment Report, which shows that significant progress has been made to bridge the digital divide over the last year. Sounding a cautionary note, [NordVPN Teams](#) has released a new report noting that two out of every five security breaches are related to a mobile or IoT device. [Juniper Research](#) has found that the number of international roaming subscribers dropped by 73 percent to 243 million globally in 2020, resulting from travel restrictions arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. This is expected to rebound during recovery.

In other mobility news, [AT&T](#) is rolling out 5G at US airports, beginning with Tampa, Florida. The multi-year effort will cover major gate and concession spaces, where travelers and airport employees have the greatest need when accessing mobile applications and entertainment with a 5G+ capable device.

## Network Transformation News

Before his tenure ended on January 20, FCC Chairman Ajit Pai signed a cross-border radio frequency spectrum [coordination agreement](#) with Canada to advance network cooperation and innovation across borders. In other domestic network news, Nokia will continue its longstanding [T-Mobile partnership](#) with a five-year deal. Under the new agreement, Nokia will continue to expand T-Mobile's extended range (low-band) 5G coverage.

In global network transformation news, [Nokia](#) announced an expansion of its strategic 5G partnership with Zain KSA. The move allows Zain KSA to support smart home and office adoption in the country with enhanced connectivity for smart devices through 5G and Wi-Fi 6. [Nokia](#) has also successfully piloted 4G and 5G fixed wireless access (FWA) network slicing with Saudi Arabian telecommunications services provider Mobily on its live commercial network, the first sliced FWA deployment in the world. In Asia, [Nokia and M1](#) have signed a partnership agreement to deploy Nokia's cloud-native core software in order to drive Singapore's 5G standalone network launch in 2021.

[Ooredoo Group and Ericsson](#) have signed a global frame agreement for the supply of 5G radio, core and transport products and solutions, as well as related implementation and integration services. The agreement covers all 10 of the group's operating companies in Qatar, Indonesia, Algeria, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Palestine, Tunisia, Myanmar and Maldives.

Alsard Fiber and its subsidiary Cellnet are set to modernize their networks using a multi-tenant BSS and affiliate solution from digital enablement and revenue management software provider [Alepo](#).

## Leaderboard and Innovation News

As the first month of a new year, January typically brings final predictions and top trends for what's to come. In this spirit, [Enea](#) gathered insights on what global operators can expect this year from a cross-section of mobile industry thought leaders including AT&T, Telefonica, RootMetrics, Tutela, Analysys Mason, Strategy Analytics and ABI Research. [Comarch Telecommunications](#) released a survey called the "Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning and the Future of Telecoms," which proves that AI-driven technologies are playing a key role today and will continue to do so in the decade ahead. The research also gives insight into the benefits of this technology and the areas it will best support.

A new report from [Juniper Research](#) has found that there will be nearly two billion active subscriptions to on-demand video services in 2025, a 65 percent increase over the end of 2020.

The primary engine for this growth will be from traditional broadcasters, who are increasingly turning to streaming services in order to extend their reach and compete with online video giants such as Netflix and Amazon Prime Video. Another [Juniper study](#) found that the total number of QR code payment users will exceed 2.2 billion in 2025, up from 1.5 billion in 2020, equating to 29 percent of all mobile phone users across the world in 2025. A third [new study](#) from the analysis firm predicted that the global number of users of RCS (Rich Communication Services) messaging will reach 3.9 billion by 2025, rising from 1.2 billion in 2020, representing an opportunity for operators to boost mobile engagement.

The [Wireless Broadband Alliance](#) released its latest 5G Wi-Fi 6 report, developed with input from mobile carriers, Wi-Fi providers, telecom manufacturers, and its own 5G Working Group. The report provides a breakdown of the current standards and key business opportunities for operators.

[Cradlepoint](#) released findings from a survey conducted through Police1, FireRescue1, EMS1 and Gov1. The survey reveals the state of critical communications and key drivers impacting digital innovation in the public safety sector.

Partnerships also made innovation news this month. [Microsoft](#) has announced a new partnership with the Broad Institute of MIT and Verily of Harvard University to accelerate new innovations in biomedicine through the Terra platform. [Firstlight Media and Evergent Technologies](#) are integrating their cloud-based capabilities to help OTT and pay-TV providers deliver end-to-end solutions that optimize and monetize audiences. [Firstlight Media](#) also announced that it has partnered with Google Cloud to support rapid deployment and expansion of OTT video streaming services for Tier 1 operators.

In another industry partnership, Vodafone Group's UK subsidiary [Vodafone Limited and Telefonica UK Limited](#) announced plans for the commercialization of Cornerstone Telecommunications Infrastructure Limited, the joint venture company that owns and manages their passive tower infrastructure in the United Kingdom. In US mergers and acquisition, [Bluebird Network](#) has acquired the ColoHub Data Center in Bettendorf, Iowa, its second data center acquisition.

Innovation news also included advancements in standards and an industry first. [ETSI](#) has launched its MEC Sandbox for edge app developers to experience and interact with an implementation of ETSI MEC APIs and test out their applications. [GridRaster](#) has achieved millimeter accuracy in mixed reality overlays using three-dimensional Artificial Intelligence (3D AI), now available for virtual overlays in enterprise design/build environments.

## Satellite News

A new path to accessing Brazil's connectivity market has been laid out for satellite service providers with the announcement of a [partnership between SatADSL and Telespazio](#). Telespazio Brazil will offer connectivity via SatADSL's Cloud-service Delivery Platform (C-SDP), which enables

SatADSL to deploy its full range of dynamic services across the country and provide Telespazio Brazil with access to additional markets in Latin America.

[GHGSat](#), which monitors high-resolution greenhouse gas monitoring from space, has successfully completed the launch of its third satellite, GHGSat-C2 (Hugo), which launched aboard a SpaceX Falcon 9 from Cape Canaveral Space Force Station as part of the SpaceX rideshare launch.

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