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The capacity industry's daily

Skype turns attention to business users

A cantankerous takeover and a reunion with founders Niklas Zennstrom and Janus Friis have dominated talk of Skype in recent weeks, but internally the VoIP operator remains focused on achieving its previously announced strategic goals before the year draws to a close.

Enterprise business development manager Matthew Jordan told CommsDay the recent ownership change had little impact on the rank and file. "I can speak to my sphere of influence and my marching orders, and those have not changed," Jordan said. "We are focused on bringing out Skype for SIP as quickly as possible, opening up that beta, getting business users to try it out and see how good they can have it. We'll continue to offer the best Skype-native on the PC and mobility and other devices as they come out. It's a little early to talk about what the goals of the new organization will be."

Jordan said the new leadership had so far left Skype to its own devices. "With regards to what the overall strategy is for Skype, in 2009 the executive leadership team laid out a game plan where we're gonna build upon the past success of our consumer application and the consumer market, and take those revenues we're able to realize through those users and reinvest it into three key areas," he said.

"That would be three key areas - business, mobility and what we term the platform team, which is opening up Skype to a larger ecosystem of hardware and software manufacturers, like the ASUS videophone that runs Skype embedded on the device. With those three business units getting the lion's share of our efforts for new developments, and because Skype mobility definitely has a play in the business space, the business use of Skype is going to be more and more important to Skype overall over time."

That includes the enterprise-grade Skype for SIP, which is slated to expand into an open beta next month following a limited deployment aimed at a handful of partners. "Any call center anywhere can make use of this right now and realize real dollar savings and enhanced productivity by enabling Skype connectivity into their legacy phone system," Jordan said of the solution, noting that former parent eBay generated 11 million minutes of call center traffic monthly. Securing just 10% of that traffic would be a major win in billable minutes for a company that so far traffics mainly in free PC to PC calls, he explained.

"These enterprises are spending money, have already invested in their Ciscos and their Nortels and other PBXs that are SIP enabled, and by adding Skype for SIP to those systems they're basically opening these SIP-enabled systems up to the Skype ecosystem of 500+ million users."

Jordan said the SIP model was proving more attractive to enterprises than the traditional Skype desktop model "because it's lower attack vector, less moving parts. Some of the stuff IT administrators may be worried about with regards to managing the Skype experience at the desktop level with the Skype client, they can take a standard approach where they roll out Skype for SIP into a controlled



system - their PBX, which is tried and true and hardened. They know where Skype is running within their network and they gain a level of comfort.”

Once they get Skype for SIP up and running, many IT managers are coming back to Skype with a view towards rolling out unified communications via the Skype Business client, which Jordan described as “a really organic and healthy way for us to grow the unified communications footprint of Skype into the enterprise, by starting off with Skype-enabling their phone systems.”

Jordan declined to give Skype for SIP adoption numbers but said the operator had obtained interest all the way up to the Fortune 5 level. “It's a little too early to show the impact of Skype for SIP has had on our call volume. However, we are actively engaged with customers that are talking about passing us easily 1 million minutes per month per customer. These are big opportunities that folks are looking to Skype to fulfill,” he said, adding an estimated 35% of existing Skype customers were already using the VoIP platform for business use before Skype for Business formally launched last November. The company claims its Skype for SIP beta queue already numbers in the thousands. Those enterprises will be able to deploy the service from next month, when Skype rolls out a series of certified OEM devices and begins working on a final price model before a commercial launch early next year.

“We’ll really be able to rightsize the pricing model that we have, because the business user is so much different than the consumer in their calling patterns” explained Jordan. “When you introduce a PBX to a business user, that type of calling pattern is very different than the business user that makes us of the Skype client natively. So during the open beta period we’ll be taking a look at the calling patterns of our thousands of users that are on beta at the time, and we’ll be able to refine our strategy with regard to our pricing model on a monthly recurring, as well as our tariffs as well as any value-adds that a business may be able to realize.” That includes the possibility of a Skype federation of SIP-enabled users, allowing participating businesses to call one another at a discounted cost.

BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS: Skype views partnerships as key to getting Skype for SIP widely embraced by the enterprise market, with Jordan acknowledging the company could stand to leverage more popular brands to win mind-share. “That is definitely where we’re focusing our efforts for the remainder of 2009,” he told CommsDay. “With our announcements we’ve made with ShoreTel and Cisco and Nortel, with more to come, we think with a few partnerships with a handful of PBX manufacturers that are going to be interoperability certified for Skype for SIP, we’ll have access to 50% or more of enterprise desktops.”

Those partnerships include PBX-to-Skype gateway manufacturers such as VoSKY. “We’re very happy with the partnership we have with them, and their customer base and their success. Whereas they were one of the few options in the past to tie a business phone system into the Skype ecosystem, now they may be more applicable for those PBXs that are not SIP-enabled, are not IP-enabled. If somebody has a small business and a key system that's 20 years old and they know that's going to work forever and is already off the books, they can get VoSKY and Skype-enable it very quick and easy,” Jordan said.

“But for those other business that know, trust and depend on partners like Cisco and ShoreTel and others, for these OEM manufacturers to help us with our message and get in front of these customers and say it is a viable, certified solution for an enterprise customer is really exciting and a key to our success,” he added. “There's several different ways the PBX manufacturers can benefit from this partnership, one being able to go to their customer base and say, 'Hey, I've got a new channel for you to open up to speak to a community of 500+ million Skype IDs. We have it certified, and we know the right people at Skype to talk to if you want to make it happen.' That definitely has helped us a great deal.”

Jordan said mobility was becoming increasingly important to enterprise customers, who have seen a sharp uptake of wireless VoIP accounts thanks to the Skype iPhone app and similar offerings. “Telecom managers and IT folks are looking to bring down the cost of mobility spend, as that number has been increasing both in the overall amount of spend as well as the percentage of telecom spend being spent on wireless. Skype for wireless applications is definitely seen as a nice fit, especially the same Skype subscriptions and IDs can be used on the mobile client as they can on the desktop, really driving the value of the subscrip-

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tion-based solutions for individuals.”

Jordan characterized the recession as a boon for Skype for Business as it forced IT managers look for ways to cut costs. “Whereas customers may have had budget for these large system installs - maybe it's an OCS or a Cisco UC or whatever it may be - now they're looking to bring down the cost but also add the functionality. The Ciscos and the Avayas all have benefits to the [unified communications] platforms that they offer, they're all enterprise grade, but there's cost and complexity with each of these systems. When you take a look at the cost and complexity of deploying Skype as maybe an overlay to a legacy 20-year-old PBX that will never be able to do video calling, then you've got a free calling client to download from wherever you can get to the Internet,” he said.

“Folks are all about saving money right now. Businesses are all about saving money - small, medium and enterprise. We have a solution that will help folks do that. We can prove it out with a free trial to show the quality is there, and once we've gotten past the quality and the learning curve that does take place with these users, we see rapid adoption at an institutional level.”

Patrick Neighly

Microsoft's new message to telcos: let's be partners

Microsoft is cozying up to the telecoms industry as part of its strategy to enter the cloud computing space. While its products are already common place inside telco organisations, Microsoft is now eyeing the telecoms sector as more than simply customers of its software, but also as partners as it promotes its cloud-based platforms, according to Microsoft general manager, communications sector for Asia Pacific, greater China, India and Japan, Geoff Thomas.

Just this month, Microsoft announced three major partnership deals with Asian service providers to promote its cloud platforms. In Taiwan, Microsoft has signed a MoU with Chunghwa Telecom to offer a range of cloud services including Software as a Service (SaaS), Platform as a Service (PaaS), and Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS). In India, Microsoft's platform is now powering Reliance Communications' cloud computing services while in Japan, the Internet Initiative of Japan (IIJ) announced that it will use Microsoft's virtualisation technology, including Hyper-V, on its cloud computing services.

These deals add to a September announcement by Microsoft and Australia's Telstra to make Microsoft Online Services available on the Telstra T-Suite platform for businesses.

So how important is this sector for Microsoft? Important enough for Microsoft CEO Steve Ballmer actually flew out to Taiwan for the signing of the Chunghwa deal. “This business has always been very important for Microsoft, but for many years, it was about driving internal efficiency in the telcos. We spoke about them as a customer. Now, it is very much talking to them as our partner,” Thomas told CommsDay International. “Now nearly all the conversations with telcos are about partnering – how can we go to market together, how can we differentiate ourselves, how do we combine our assets to bring new services to market. That is really how we have evolved.”

Effectively, Microsoft is turning to the telecoms industry as a channel to sell its cloud based platform and services – a situation that is a natural fit, according to Thomas.

“If you think about it, Microsoft has got a strong brand, and we've got a very broad portfolio of software and assets. We can help with marketing and launch joint go-to-markets. The service provider – they've got massive reach, they've got tremendous customer relationships, from consumers to businesses and enterprises, they own the billing relationship and they own the customer care relationship. Then they've got the local market knowledge and local executive,” he said. “Our proposition is, if you combine the assets of Microsoft with the assets of the service provider, it becomes a pretty compelling proposition for our joint customers, and our customers' customers.”

DEPLOYMENT OPTIONS: As part of the strategy, Microsoft is not only bringing to the table its software, but also its investments in infrastructure and services. Telcos can choose to commit to the level of investments they make, as

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well as the types of services they want to offer.

Microsoft, according to Thomas, will offer telcos a full selection of deployment options, ranging from white labelled services hosted inside Microsoft data centres, to services hosted and managed by the telco's own infrastructure.

"With these partnerships, they take different forms. Some of it is SaaS and that involves working with them to host Microsoft products and services – whether they host that themselves or it is hosted in a data centre operated by Microsoft," Thomas said. "Another way we work with them is around the platform and the infrastructure that enables that environment through technologies like virtualisation. Microsoft has invested and will continue to invest in data centres, and we'll continue to enable partner hosting as well – we will continue to offer that choice. They can also use a third party hosting providers."

So far, telcos are warming to Microsoft's message, Thomas said, adding that there's been a lot of interest in Microsoft's cloud computing offering, Windows Azure.

"We think there's a shift going on in the industry. Some of the things that the telcos tell us, they are looking to transform more than ever – it is a highly competitive environment; they are looking to differentiate; they need value added services. They've got new demands from customers that they are trying to deal with. So they are looking to generate new revenue streams, and also they are looking to better leverage the long term assets, their infrastructure assets. They've got these massive assets that they are not fully leveraging today," he added. "They are trying to drive up ARPU, they are trying to drive up subscriptions and really differentiating themselves. They are talking about different ways of bundling, (for example) SaaS with broadband. So really for them, it's about cross-sell, up-sell, increasing their cash generation and metrics. That's really the benefit – they take it and build their own unique offerings around it and really leverage their other services and offerings."

Out of India: Bharti Airtel's global play

Bharti Airtel's announcement of its Far East Connect Network last week in Hong Kong signals more than just the launch of regional wholesale play, but the arrival of a truly global telecoms giant that rivals most international carriers today.

In a few short years, Bharti Airtel has emerged from a mobile giant in its

home market to become the operator of one of the most extensive networks in the world. But instead of acquiring assets, like its two Indian peers Tata Communications and Reliance Globalcom, Bharti Airtel went out and invested in new projects, and sought out strategic partners, for its expansion.

The result is a global network that now includes ownership of the i2i cable linking Chennai, India with Singapore, and membership in two of the latest cables coming on to the market – the Unity cable with Google and partners, and the consortium built AAG cable. Together with purchased and leased capacity on other systems, Airtel's global network now features at least three diverse paths going eastward and westward out of India to the US.

Now Airtel has put those assets together, starting with the Far East Connect Network, which Bharti Airtel Global Data Business CEO Ajay Chitkara

describes as a "pure service platform" focused on the Asia Pacific region. The launch follows the completion of several projects for the operator in the region, starting with the official service launch of the AAG cable.

"We are officially launching AAG. In the past, we've said AAG is coming. Now it is available, it's up and live, we can put customers on it," Chitkara said in an interview with CommsDay International.

At the same time, Airtel is officially launching its POP in Hong Kong, which will serve as a strategic interconnection point for AAG and a new partnership



deal with Reliance Globalcom's RNAL cable.

"We have built up this network from India and US, all the way covering Singapore, Hong Kong, Japan and then the US. Now we have signed a partnership deal with another carrier partners to enhance our coverage to Korea, Taiwan. So we are interconnecting RNAL with AAG. That will give us additional coverage to Korea and Taiwan. This cable will interconnect with us in Hong Kong," he said.

The last component of the Far East Connect Network offering is a new terrestrial path between India and China.

"In China, we have completed the path into China and it is a unique one – it is a diverse path into China. We have two paths on terrestrial into China. Basically, it is a redundant network terminating into China. Earlier, one of our competitors has put up a network but that is a linear network. In that kind of environment, where reaching and getting to the cable can take days, a linear path was not enough, so we thought – it was a large investment from us – but we decided to make it a redundant path. It is two completely different paths a couple of kilometres away from each other, not on the other side of the road," Chitkara said, adding that the cable execution work is nearly complete and service launch is expected in "sometime in early January."

"These are important areas and so we thought we'd repackage everything for Asia Pac and launched formally into the market," he said.

FLEXIBLE MODEL: What is new about the Far East Connect Network concept is that it is not restricted to one type of service, product or region. As stated by Chitkara in an earlier interview with CommsDay on the launch of Airtel's global wholesale play, the operator's strategy is to offer up its infrastructure in a way that encompasses both service and commercial flexibility.

"We are positioning this in two ways. One we are simply telling our partner once they hook up into our network, they can access IP, Ethernet, transmission – anywhere on our network. So it is kind of one interconnect which can help you to access multiple products," Chitkara said.

"The second piece is it is going to be pretty flexible. We are not just offering them this so they can just buy capacity. We are saying 'ok, you have capacity, but you don't have IP peering strength, so we bring our IP peering strength and align with you,' or 'in terms of Ethernet, although you are very strong in Asia Pac but you want to go somewhere in the Middle East, we have locations there.' That way, it's a combination of multiple distant locations where we have nodes on our network they can rely on us to reach there."

The strategy, according to Chitkara, really opens up Airtel to many opportunities to address different requirements of its carrier customers. Carriers can extend their network coverage by tapping into Airtel's cable assets, or they can expand their service level coverage by interconnecting to Airtel's network on the IP and Ethernet layer. The model also means that new domestic carriers can now outsource all their international requirements to Airtel.

"In that case, we can put the whole network up, they can simply use access, bring the customers and hook on to our network – that's another model," Chitkara explained.

In fact, this model is working so well that Airtel is now turning India into a network hub for neighbouring countries, especially in the IP space.

"Basically, we recently went to neighbouring countries of India we said ' we have a lot of IP traffic that is going over our network, why are you also going from your country to the same US, Europe destinations? Why don't you come to India and make it a hub? They started giving 100% of the traffic to us and we take care of all their needs, whether they need to terminate the traffic in Asia Pac, Europe, or to the US, or to Australia, or the Middle East. They simply come to us and we take care of all the different routes," he said.

"We have picked up a large outsourcing deal from Bangladesh, where the pool of IP has been outsourced to us."

The same strategy will be applied to value-added services next year.

"Our enterprise business in India has built up a lot of expertise such as managed services, security services and so on. We are going to package all those expertise, so that these expertises can be white-labelled and offered to carriers in developing markets who don't want to build up similar capabilities in house."

"We are saying 'ok, you have capacity, but you don't have IP peering strength, so we bring our IP peering strength and align with you,'" - Bharti Airtel's Chitkara

CABLE INTERCONNECT: Another trait of Airtel's strategy is that it is not only asking carriers to use its network, but it is also seeking to extend its coverage through partnerships, such as its interconnection deal with the RNAL system.

"I think, previously, the carrier industry is a different industry. Normally, in those days, people believed that they have the capability to invest and then go and sell in their own way. We have not taken that direction. We have built up these capacities for our own customers and countries."

"Now we think we have a highway network available between India and the US on both east and west directions. This high capacity next generation network, we can align and share with multiple additional carriers, or we can align and share with the carriers who wanted to use a portion of it and wanted to interconnect their cables to it," he said.

In addition to the deal with RNAL, Chitkara also revealed a similar interconnection deal with AJC, which will interconnect with AAG at Guam, giving customers "another route to come either to Asia or to go to the US." Airtel is also planning a similar interconnection with an African cable, he added.

More interesting is the fact that these cable interconnection partnerships are not simply exchanges of capacities on each other's network, but are actually based on a revenue share model that rewards both partners when capacity is sold across the infrastructure.

"We believe that is going to help because both our managements will work towards filling these capacities without making more investments into new geographies," he said.

NEW CABLE: That is not to say Airtel will cease investment into new projects. According to Chitkara, Airtel will continue to invest in its network to support the organic growth of its business in India, including plans for a new Asian system linking Singapore and Japan.

"We are also exploring and will be announcing in the next couple of months, a new route between Singapore and Japan, so that is going to be a joint, consortium type of cable. We believe we have appetite to focus into this market and there's a need for a new system there," he said. "For us, it makes a lot of sense because we have 8.2Tbps between Chennai and Singapore, and we have Unity between Japan and the US. Although AAG and APCN2 are giving us capacity, to connect i2i with Unity, there's still a gap that needs to be fulfilled by a new asset."

"We are also exploring and will be announcing in the next couple of months, a new route between Singapore and Japan, so that is going to be a joint, consortium type of cable. " - Bharti's Chitkara

The case for the rise of VPLS

While MPLS-based IP VPN continues to be the most popular corporate VPN technology today, demand for more robust network bandwidth is driving the adoption of another service layer in the MPLS network – Ethernet.

According to Reliance Globalcom vice president of sales & marketing Asia Pacific, Fabrizio Civitarese, there are now clear cases for companies to go with Ethernet-based VPLS (Virtual Private Line Service) on the MPLS core.

In a deal announced last week, Reliance Globalcom convinced global manufacturer, Richco, to go migrate their core network straight to Ethernet VPLS from their previous IP VPN using the open Internet.

"This is a classic example of a customer using IP VPN to connect three sites in Chicago, London and China. They had performance issues. They couldn't run properly their Oracle application due to the lack of network availability and their team in China was complaining about delays in the reporting and really, the productivity of the company was impacted," Civitarese said.

"So we proposed to them a different solution. This was more a proactive proposition from us, in a consultative approach, on why instead of IP VPN, they should move to a different type of technology – Layer 2 VPLS.

"When we go to a customer, we really ask them first what are their needs for the network, how big is the network and what applications are running on the network and based on that, suggest what we believe is the best solution that gives the best performance to them. In this case, with three sites and a backbone network, VPLS was the best solution."

The biggest benefit for Richco with the new VPLS network is that it now runs over Reliance's own private network, allowing the operator to offer SLAs on elements such as network availability and latency.



“Layer 2 VPLS, from a different perspective, not only can deliver better performance overall, but also offer better latency.” - Reliance Globalcom’s Civitarese

“We were able to guarantee latency at the level that they needed to run their application. They have been very happy since then,” he said, adding that Ethernet was an obvious choice for Richco’s requirements because of the limited number of sites that needed the connectivity and the robustness of the technology. “I can tell you that IP VPN is of course still the technology of choice, but Layer 2 VPLS, from a different perspective, not only can deliver better performance overall, but also offer better latency. VPLS is a layer 2 technology, and when you have the network that we have, you can really link the sites directly, and it is much more scalable.”

According to Civitarese, there is a lot of interest right now on VPLS with customers asking about the technology and recognizing the latency and scalability advantages of deploying Ethernet over MPLS.

“What we see, there is an increase in customers who pick up VPLS, or are interested in VPLS. Of course, it is a process that takes some time – it’s not like customers are switching to VPLS right away, but there is a lot of interest,” he said.

“Of course it depends on how many sites you have. If you have a huge number of sites all over the world, then you probably need a combination of MPLS and VPLS. VPLS delivers the best performance when it is delivered over a backbone network like it is the case for us. If you have an extremely high number of additional sites, then probably a combination of MPLS and VPLS will work best.”

At the moment, IP-based VPNs still makes up the majority of traffic on the MPLS core network, but key backbone routes are seeing a trend towards VPLS, he said. “There’s an increased trend in VPLS, especially in countries like Japan for example, where you have customers now looking for VPLS connectivity from Japan and the US.”

MEF founder eyes Asia next for carrier ethernet hubs

The Metro Ethernet Forum founder and president Nan Chen’s company which provides interconnection capability as a service will be looking to establishing carrier ethernet exchanges in Singapore and Hong Kong next.

CENX has recently launched the world’s first three carrier ethernet exchanges in New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago. These exchanges are open will help accelerate the growth of the carrier ethernet market to the projected US\$39 billion worldwide by 2013. The projection had been made by Vertical Systems.

Chen said that Singapore and Hong Kong are the next logical steps as most European cables land on Singapore and US cables on Hong Kong- making it more convenient to do interconnections.

According to Infonetics Research, the global carrier ethernet market has grown from US\$17 billion revenues in 2008 to US\$39 billion in 2009.

Chen said that prior to the launch of CENX exchanges, carrier ethernet growth had mostly been confined within each service provider’s footprint and doing outside connections would entail separate negotiations with each of the service providers in those areas. This often renders most of intended interconnects uneconomical or unfeasible.

This is where CENX comes in. The new CENX exchanges will streamline and simplify interconnection, serving as intermediaries. Service providers will only have to connect to one CENX hub and that hub will allow for interconnection with the other service providers. This service is the first of its kind and marks the beginning of a new market for carrier ethernet, said Chen.

Moreover, Chen is convinced that the interest for this offering is very high as it was the service providers themselves who asked for it. “Service providers were desperate for a relief to the tedious process of negotiating connections to too many service providers. Service providers want to see this happen.”

Chen, who is president of MEF, told CommsDay International that about ten of the 60 MEF service provider members have already signed up for the carrier ethernet exchanges and he believes this number will grow tremendously more.

“Before CENX, interconnection was economically unfeasible and service pro-



viders were feeling the pain. I believe it is important to know what a customer wants and what that customer's business requires. Carrier ethernet exchanges is the next generation infrastructure of ethernet simply because the people are demanding it," said Chen.

MEF COO Kevin Vachon shared with CommsDay the same sentiments. "It is fantastic. This development is important and a good service for the industry. It is not a new concept but its introduction comes very timely in the market."

"CENX' innovation is a reflection of the need for interconnection and MEF members would most likely find this a good idea," Vachon said. "The issue of interconnection is huge."

"The MEF Ethernet Exchange Committee—consisting of Verizon, ATT, Level 3, Orange, Tata, Cablevision and Cox—worked for a year to identify the need and provide a framework to the complex technical and business issues around interconnection, and concluded that the initiative was best served by the formation of independent companies," explained MEF board chairman and Orange Business Services VP for network solutions Dennis Kruse. "CENX, the first such company to address the Carrier Ethernet interconnection market, is poised for growth."

In fact, MEF has been focusing on extending the network to network interface of ethernet. It has recently launched the Global Interconnect Program which zones in on accelerating adoption of carrier-class ethernet network and services. It has also been making headway in ethernet standardization, facilitating interconnection among service providers. Certification programs are supporting interconnection, said Vachon.

MEF has also been pushing for the certification of service providers' ethernet services as well. Presently, there are already 30 service providers that have had their ethernet services certified. Testing and standards company Iometrix has been taking care of the testing for this, Vachon said, adding that certification will eventually extend to the network to network interface.

Pamela Perez

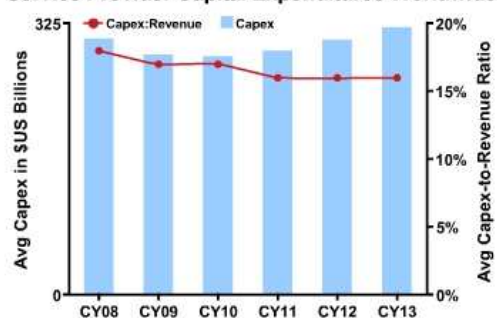
Carrier capex to flatline 2010

Service provider capex is unlikely to recover until 2011, according to Infonetics Research. The analyst believes 2009 investment will fall 6% from the US\$305 billion spent last year thanks to MEA pullback, weakening key currencies and the delayed US broadband stimulus awards. Mobile and voice will dominate capex in the near term, buoyed by subscribers' refusal to drop cellular services despite recessionary pressure. Optical networking is expected to buck the trend with single-digit growth. The reduced spending comes alongside reduced earnings, with Infonetics forecasting a US\$1.67 trillion global haul.

"Global telecom service provider capital expenditures hit a plateau in 2008, marking the end of a five-year investment cycle and the beginning of a three-year disinvestment cycle, albeit a less dramatic one than what followed the great telecom crash of 2000," explained analyst Stephane Teral. "Capex will bottom down in 2010 and a new investment cycle will start in 2011, driven by 3G roll-outs in India and Central and Latin America, the start of 3G roll-outs in Africa, and a ramp-up in LTE deployments in Australia, Brazil, Western Europe, Japan and North America."

AT&T leads Infonetics' global service provider ranking by revenue, followed by NTT, Verizon, Deutsche Telekom, France Telecom, Vodafone, China Mobile, Telefonica, BT and Sprint.

Service Provider Capital Expenditures Worldwide



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Publisher:

Grahame Lynch
grahamelynch@
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Business Development:

Glend de Leon
Glend@commsdaymail.com

Sales & marketing:

Mascy Cabuhat
Mascy@commsdaymail.com

Decisive Mail:

PO Box A191 Sydney South
NSW 1235
AUSTRALIA.

Decisive Fax:

+612 9261 5434

Decisive Internet:

www.commsday.com

For advertising or payment
details contact Sally Lloyd
sally@commsday
.com.au or call +61-
292615435

**THIS PUBLICATION
IS COPYRIGHT****Editor at large:**

Tony Chan (Hong Kong)
Tony@commsdaymail.com

Editor, United States:

Patrick Neighly (Los Angeles)
Patrick@commsdaymail.com

Assistant editor:

Pamela Perez (Manila)
Pamela@commsdaymail.com

**Correspondent,
Kuala Lumpur:**

Cat Yong
catyong88@gmail.com

Editor, Australia:

Luke Coleman
Luke@commsday.com.au

ALSO MAKING NEWS

Motorola buys iDen business

Motorola acquired RadioFrame Networks' iDEN business for an undisclosed sum. Motorola said it would integrate the operation into its Home & Networks Mobility business, boosting its portfolio of special mobile radio multi-channel base stations for international sales. RadioFrame's technology enables push-to-talk iDEN operators to more flexibly manage their non-contiguous spectrum holdings and maintain a smaller infrastructure footprint. Motorola said the buy would allow it to augment its PTT technology roadmap.

YTL Communications seals tower-sharing deal with Telekom Malaysia

Malaysian WiMAX license holder YTL Communications says it has signed a 15-year wholesale ethernet service and master tenancy for infrastructure sharing deal with Telekom Malaysia.

Access to TM's wholesale ethernet infrastructure will allow YTL Communications to gain from the scalability of bandwidth through TM's integrated solutions. YTL will also be able to leverage on the sustained and reliable bandwidth of TM's wholesale ethernet to access large volumes of data and utilize bandwidth intensive applications.

YTL Communications will tap on to more than 200 TM telecommunications towers across the country to facilitate the roll-out and installation of its WiMAX network. YTL has approval from the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission to operate a 2.3 GHz wireless broadband network in Malaysia.

Huawei snaps up deal with Belgacom

-The Belgian incumbent telecom operator Belgacom has signed a frame agreement with Huawei enabling the progressive upgrade of its entire radio access network with Huawei's SingleRAN solution.

Under this long-term frame agreement, Belgacom will upgrade the entire radio access network across GSM, UMTS, LTE and multiple frequencies. This upgrade will cover the whole Belgian territory over the years to come.

"By partnering with Huawei for the progressive swap of the current Proximus radio network, Belgacom continues to pursue its fixed mobile convergence strategy in a controlled way. It will allow to further reinforce Belgacom's mobile leadership in Belgium over the years to come. Several key suppliers were competing for this strategic deal; this fierce competition resulted in attractive financial proposals for the Group as well as aggressive technological roadmaps allowing to keep up with leading-edge technologies," said Belgacom executive vice-president service delivery engine & wholesale Scott Alcott.

Paltel calls off merger with Zain

Paltel has called off its planned merger with Kuwait's Zain, citing a lack of the necessary government permissions.

Zain said, "it confirms that the merger agreement between Zain and Paltel announced earlier this year will not take place because Zain did not receive the required government approvals that were conditions precedent to concluding the deal."

Under the terms of the agreement that was announced back in May, Zain was to transfer its ownership of its Jordan subsidiary to Paltel in exchange for taking an equity shareholding of 56.53% in the enlarged company. Zain had been seeking "significant" synergies and efficiencies in CAPEX and OPEX spend and purchasing power.