

Singapore NBN builders reveal their deployment, marketing plans

The two companies responsible for deploying and operating Singapore's planned national FTTP network have provided extensive new details on how they plan to encourage uptake of the service. The strategy will be of intense interest to NBN planners in Australia and New Zealand.

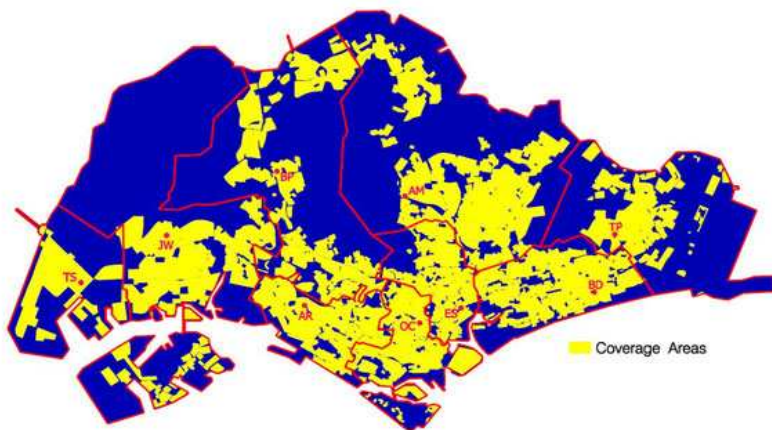
Under Singapore's internationally unique separation policy, the Opennet consortium, headed by Axia Netmedia with Singtel, will deploy a passive optical network, while Nucleus Connect, a StarHub unit, will operate the switches and electronics on the network as a wholesale, providing open access to retail service providers.

In a packed-out conference in Singapore yesterday, Opennet CEO Tan Kah-Rhu said that the consortium planned to connect 60% of premises by the end of 2010 and 95% by 2012. Singapore has 1.11m households and 24,000 commercial premises, concentrated primarily in 30,000 high-rise buildings.

Tan said that, in the first instance, Opennet will send a letter to building owners seeking permission to install fibre. They can choose not to do so, but will incur greater fees and delays if they change their mind at a later date.

Occupiers of premises will be sent a connection offer letter with at least three weeks notice. Connections at this point will be free, but if that offer is ignored, a subsequent connection will be charged at S\$220 or more for businesses. (One Singapore dollar equals 88 Australian cents).

In another move aimed at intensifying take-up, Tan also explained that Nucleus Connect will not be the only "operating company" allowed to operate electronics on the network, with an additional class of "qualifying persons" also able to do so. Informed sources close to the process tell CommsDay that these "qualifying persons" are the likely to come from the ranks of the 40 or more existing facilities carriers in Singapore who may seek fibre to terminate their own customers and networks.



The eventual planned full extent of the Singapore national broadband network. It will be operated by nine exchanges.

VIDEO DRIVES

ASIAN SATELLITE SERVICES

The global recession has made limited impact on Asian satellite services, with video broadcasting driving growth and TV broadcasting transponder demand increasing from 25% in 2003 to 37% in 2008, according to a new report from the Cable & Satellite Broadcasting Association of Asia. The market has registered a 9% growth in 2008/2009 with some 1,370 transponders currently in use across the region. Despite some high regulatory barriers, several markets have been particularly dynamic in terms of capacity requirements, including India, China and Indonesia, said the report. The growth has been previously focused on direct-to-home TV broadcasting in emerging markets, particularly India. While the number of DTH platforms in Asia increased from just 13 to 28 platforms from 2002 – 2008. The number of TV channels broadcast on DTH platforms soared from 925 to just below 2,600 at year end. While India remains the fastest growing market, now with more than 11 million DTH subscribers, nine Asian other countries now have more than 500,000 DTH connections.

...BUT CAPACITY OVERSUPPLY?

Nevertheless, an oversupply of Asian capacity is still a structural challenge, said the CASBAA. The fill rate has only recently reached 60% for the first time last year and is still below a world average of around 70%. This reflects the sustained competition between satellite operators, "but shows there is still terrific up-side for our region," said Simon Twiston Davies, CEO of CASBAA. The total number of satellites in operation over the region was just over 80 in 2008. "The fact is that restrictive regulations in many Asian countries continue to constrain the market," said Twiston Davies. "But deregulation, like digitization, is an inexorable force that is presenting commercial enterprises, as well as consumers, with ever greater choice

However, with Nucleus Connect receiving a subsidy of S\$250m from the government to build its network, observers suggest most retail service providers are unlikely to invest in their own electronics.

Opennet, which is receiving S\$750m in direct subsidies, is pricing monthly fibre connections at S\$15 a month for residential and \$50 a month for non-residential. Nucleus Connect will use those connections as the key input into its conditioned services, which will be priced at relatively low mark-ups: an extra S\$6 for residential and an extra S\$25 for non-residential respectively.

According to Nucleus CEO David Storrie, the service offerings are designed to create maximum flexibility for retailers. There will be four classes of service ranging from best-effort to mission-critical. The network will support both GPON and Ethernet, and a wide range of services including VoIP, VPN, videoconferencing, leased lines, security, mobile backhaul and broadcast offerings will be supported, along with multicast functionality.

Opennet will operate nine central offices or exchanges across Singapore, while Nucleus will operate two. Service processes between the two in relation to provisioning and troubleshooting will be automated and based entirely online. Retail service providers will be able to access this system as well.

The websites of both entities will promote offerings of retail service providers.

Grahame Lynch in Singapore

Equinix's SG2: built for clouds and financial trading

New cloud computing deployments and the company's strategic move into financial services exchanges will drive growth at Equinix's second Singapore facility, or SG2, currently being built near Pioneer Walk on the western end of the island state.

Clement Goh, managing director of Equinix Singapore, revealed to CommsDay that one of the major improvements of SG2 is its power density, something that the company's customers are increasingly demanding. According to Goh, the company's first facility started with a power density of 1.2kw per square feet in the year 2000, which was upgraded incrementally to a power density of 3kw by 2008.

"More recently, we are getting requests for power density of 4kw-6kw," he said. "With the new site, we are anticipating high density platforms such as cloud computing, so we are designing in higher power density."

The new facility will have an average power density of 3.8kw, or a maximum power density that is as much as twice that in a mix applications environment.



than ever. And it is choice that is driving demand."

SYRINGA TO MERGE WITH CLEAR TALK

US rural wireless carriers Syringa Wireless and Clear Talk Idaho are set to merge late next month and will then operate under the name Syringa Wireless with Mike Hunsaker, current General Manager of Syringa Wireless, staying on as General Manager of the new combined operation. "This merger will enable both companies to evolve in this rapidly changing environment," said Larry Curry, President of Clear Talk Idaho. "Subscribers will have greater choices in service options and enhanced calling features." According to Charles Creason, Chairman of the Board of Directors for Syringa Wireless, the two companies have been in talks since 2002, and have built a strong mutual respect for each other. "This merger is a statement demonstrating our fundamental goal to offer advanced and affordable mobile wireless products to southern and eastern Idaho," Creason said. The duo will be working jointly to provision each Clear Talk subscribers' phone with software upgrades needed to transition to the Syringa Wireless Network in late July. They plan to continue operating 13 Syringa Wireless retail locations along with 5 of the original Clear Talk stores. The company will retain current staff.

12 OPERATORS TO LAUNCH LTE IN 2010, SAYS ABI

A dozen wireless operators have committed to deploying LTE networks and offering LTE-based services in 2010, according to a new study from ABI Research. Nearly 34 million users worldwide are forecast to subscribe to the new ultra-fast data services, which promise speeds rivaling those available via cable or DSL, by the following year. The first operators intending to deploy LTE include Verizon Wireless, MetroPCS Wireless, and U.S. Cellular in the United States; NTT-DOCOMO and

“Not all our customers will be drawing that much power, so spare power from one rack can be put to use in other racks, thus increasing the maximum power density,” he said.

The new facility will address emerging requirements from cloud computing operators, such as Amazon Web Services, who are building out infrastructure in Asia, as well as cloud services providers like salesforce.com, Microsoft, Fujitsu and others, he said.

In Singapore, Equinix’s existing 140,000-sq ft, SG1 facility services 220 discrete customers, including about 105 telcos, Goh said. SG1 has been operating at 90% utilization for the past few months, he added.

When it comes online, SG2 will bring online a further 100,000 sq ft of space. The first phase, to be launched on 1 August, will feature 700 racks of space while a second planned phase will add another 1,000 racks.

In addition to its traditional customer base of telco users and new cloud computing operators, Equinix is also attempting to replicate its carrier neutral telecoms exchange model for financial exchanges, Goh said.

“Before, we had the iBX, or international business exchange, now we have eFX. What happens is the New York Stock Exchange, the London Stock Exchange, the Euronet, they have a very mature market, what they want to do is attract usage from Asia, enabling Asian traders to trade easily with them,” Goh said.

“So what they do is – instead of moving the user to them, they are moving their exchanges closer to the trader. So they are moving the network core of their exchange into our site and then the local traders can connect to them directly and trade with them – with very low latency. We are not just talking about stocks, but also commodities, currency. These can be traded in various exchanges, so the exchanges are all bidding for this business, they need to innovate. The first one that will come out (to Asia) will gain the market share.”

Tony Chan

VNL’s solar-power GSM nodes now commercial available

VNL has developed a solar-powered WorldGSM base station for rural villages officially launched at Singapore’s CommunicAsia trade show yesterday. Rajiv Mehrotra, founder, CEO and chairman of VNL, told CommsDay that the system will provide remote villages with GSM coverage through a model that encourages local entrepreneurs while alleviating the capex and opex obligations for operators.

Each of the WorldGSM nodes, including the antenna, solar panels and battery, will cost US\$15,000, and ships in six boxes, Mehrotra said, adding that two people can assemble the site in a matter of hours. The solar panels are guaranteed for 15 years, while the battery is guaranteed for 4 years. Each nodes of the system offers a GSM coverage radius of about 2 kilometers. According to Mehrotra, the entire system draws only 40 watts of power, allowing the company to use much smaller and cost effective solar panels. The low power consumption also means that it can operate much longer even without the sun.

“One, two, three days without the sun, it’s no problem,” he said. “Rain, storm, no problem.”

The pricing of the system also offers an attractive ROI for its customers. The WorldGSM is designed to be rolled out by franchises of mobile operators in remote regions. The idea behind WorldGSM is to allow local residents in rural areas to purchase the equipment and become the local franchise of mobile operators – a concept VNL calls “microtelecom.” These entrepreneurs build and operate the infrastructure, which is then connected to a mobile operator’s network. The franchise owners then take responsibility for sale and distribution of the operator’s service locally.

KDDI in Japan; TeliaSonera, Tele2 and Telenor in Europe; and the world’s largest operator China Mobile which intends to launch in 2011. KT and SK Telecom are expected to launch in Korea 2010, but there has been little fanfare so far. “Spectrum availability is the primary factor impacting deployment plans,” said senior analyst Nadine Manjaro. “In countries where telecommunications regulators are making appropriate spectrum available, many operators have announced plans to launch LTE. These include the US, Sweden, China, and others. Where no such spectrum allocations exist, operators are postponing LTE plans.” For the infrastructure equipment vendors, a few operators have already announced the contracts they have awarded. Alcatel-Lucent, Ericsson, and Starent are the winners of a major set of contracts from Verizon Wireless. In Japan, NTT-DOCOMO, in addition to tapping the world’s largest network infrastructure supplier, Ericsson, is also supporting local vendors NEC and Fujitsu. Teli-aSonera has chosen Ericsson and Huawei, while its fellow Scandinavian operators Tele2 and Telenor are also thought likely to settle on Huawei, which is proving a formidable competitor. “The operators are looking for strong partners,” said Manjaro. “Operators want to know their vendors be staying in business, that they’ll have the equipment ready early, and that they are financially strong enough to collaborate in developing new services and solutions.”

AIRTEL HITS 5M CUSTOMER MARK IN DELHI

India’s Bharti Airtel has surpassed 5 million customers in the Delhi & NCR circle, making it the first mobile operator to achieve this landmark in a metro circle. It has added the last million subscribers in only 13 months in a circle that already boasts of a mobile penetration of almost 100%. “The significant milestone of crossing the 5 million customer mark in the circle from where Airtel started its remarkable journey back in 1995, is indeed an extremely

This allows the operators to offload the capex and opex of operating these remote systems to the local franchise, all the while gaining the user base, traffic and revenue in new areas.

The price of WorldGSM also presents attractive ROIs for the local entrepreneurs. At US\$15,000, a village with a population of 2,000 users generating ARPU of US\$2/month will offer a payback on investment of less than six months.

At the same time, the company has been approached by many Asian operators to provide its low-cost, zero-opex base station to extend their coverage to remote areas. Each of the WorldGSM nodes will cost US\$15,000 and will provide coverage to an area with a radius of about 2 kilometers, Mehrotra said.

Huawei, ZTE unleash Tb-enabled edge routers

Huawei and ZTE both released major upgrades to their router portfolio at the Communicasia 2009 show in Singapore this week, pushing performance to the multi-terabit level with support for 40G network interfaces, as well as integrating service capabilities into the edge of the network.

Huawei Technologies' new NE40E USR router series now features the company's new "NetEngine V6" platform which now offers up to 400Gbps of routing capacity per slot, capable of up to 960GE ports per chassis. The NE40E USR is essentially a refresh of the company's existing NE40 router series, and is fully backwards compatible with the existing platform, including support for existing line cards.

In addition to the higher port density with the 400G per slot back pane, the new Huawei router also features a number of enhancements that improve the energy efficiency and performance of applications – in particular video and mobile broadband – on the platform.

According to Huawei executives, energy consumption per GE/10GE port is roughly 10% below comparable products on the market. The higher density also means it is only 60% the size of comparable systems, further improving its energy signature. The platform also incorporates a new U-shape air flow system and a modular power system to further reduce cooling and energy costs.

At the same time, the new Huawei platform offers a number of video-specific optimisations such error correction, real-time stream monitoring, and integrated caching capabilities. Meanwhile, the platform is one of the first commercial products that support the IEEE 1588V2 standard for clock synchronisation, an important feature for mobile deployments. Other service features supported by the NE40E USR series include broadband remote access server, IPSec and Deep Packet Inspection. Huawei is also developing support for future services such as GGSN (Gateway GPRS Support Node).

ZTE also announced a new high density router called the ZXR10 M6000, a carrier class router with integrated broadband remote access server (BRAS) and support for 40Gbps ports. According to ZTE, the ZXR10 M6000 now supports 480Gbps per line card, and offers a maximum switching capacity of 3.84Tbps per unit.

The solution will allow service providers to deploy 40Gbps performance all the way to the edge of their access network, enabling them to support higher speed access services, or alternatively, more subscribers at current speeds from the same box.

The ZXR10 M6000 is complemented by ZTE's existing 40Gbps DWDM backbone equipment, which now enables service providers to roll out a complete 40Gbps core, said Zhao Qiang, ZTE's data communication product general manager.

The integration of BRAS into the edge router also enables faster deployment by operators, while ensuring future scalability as subscribers sign up and access the service.

proud and special moment. This is a testimony to the faith and trust that the customers of the Delhi & NCR have reposed on Airtel and we would like to take this opportunity to thank every single one of them. This surely inspires us to achieve much more and continue on our commitment to provide world-class mobile services and unmatched quality of coverage to the people of Delhi," said Shashi Arora, CEO - Bharti Airtel Limited, (Mobile Services), Delhi & NCR.

ZYLOG LAUNCHES WIFI MESH IN SINGAPORE

Zylog Systems India has launched its wireless Internet service Wi5 in Chennai. Zylog has adopted a mesh network architecture, which works by the setting up of intelligent wi-fi nodes atop select buildings across the city. This essentially means that every house will not need a separate router to gain Wi-fi Internet access. However, users will still need a wi-fi-enabled laptop or personal computer or a separate Wi-fi card to access this service. The firm has rolled out the wi-fi services in Besant Nagar, Adyar and parts of Ashok Nagar and T Nagar in the initial phase. It has also enabled seamless wi-fi connectivity on the IT corridor from Madhya Kailash to Siruseri, which means unlimited connectivity even while travelling on the IT corridor at any point of time.

VERIZON'S MALAYSIAN PUSH

Verizon Business says it now offering Internet Dedicated Access and Internet Dedicated Ethernet services in Malaysia. The new enhancements are available thanks to a new Malaysian IP node, jointly established with Telekom Malaysia to support the delivery of advanced data services in the country. The announcement comes a day after TM and Telstra signed a deal to co-operate globally on servicing each other.

“As the number of subscribers and traffic grows, the operator simply has to deploy another M6000 next to the first one to support further growth,” Zhao said.

Tony Chan

Mobile walled gardens: not dead yet

Mobile carrier ‘walled gardens’ of online content will actually continue to grow despite easier access to the open internet, according to Amdocs ChangingWorlds.

While many commentators have predicted the death of walled garden content due to improvements in mobile web browsers, ChangingWorlds President David Moran told CommsDay that both carriers and users will find benefits in accessing walled content – including new opportunities for mobile advertisers.

“I believe that the ‘walled garden’, the home portal, will continue to grow. It won’t grow at the same rate as the off-portal, but it’s not going to diminish,” Moran said. ChangingWorlds technology allows carriers to track users off-portal behaviour (with users full permission) when they navigate away from a home page, meaning walled garden content can then be customised for each user’s tastes.

“As we help [users] to go off-portal to highly recommended places based on our knowledge of them, we’re actually tracking where they’re going... we’re actually helping the service provider not only to maintain control [inside the walled garden] but outside the walled garden.”

Customised portals means lower ‘interaction costs’: the time users spend looking for what they want on the mobile web. “We did a lot of analysis on this and we found out... if the average subscriber takes more than 12 seconds or six clicks to find something, they’ll actually give up,” Moran said. “You have this narrow window of opportunity to actually get your subscriber hooked and to get the spending more time and more money on the mobile internet... most providers are overlooking the whole interaction cost and we address that with personalisation.”

And with increased knowledge of user behaviour comes new opportunities for targeted advertising. “Mobile advertising has been talked about for years,” Moran said, noting that one carrier the company had spoken to typically experienced a click-through rate of just 0.05% on mobile campaigns – just one in every 200 viewers. “Using our personalisation capability, we’re able to now get, over an elongated period of time, between 6-9% click-through rate.”

Luke Coleman in Singapore

Asia the driving force behind mobile marketing

The Asian region looks to be the driving force behind global mobile marketing, according to the Mobile Marketing Association. Seeking to counter perceptions that mobile marketing is yet to take root, MMA managing director Rohit Dadwal told CommsDay it is already a booming industry – the challenge is to find a way to measure just how booming it really is.

“We believe that the next growth for membership [in the MMA] will really come from Asia,” Dadwal said. “This is where the advertising is happening, this is where the innovation on mobile phones is happening, services, content, applications – everything is really being driven out of various markets [in Asia].”

Dadwal said Asia is hard to define as its own region since mobile marketing efforts are so different in diverse markets.

Luke Coleman in Singapore

COMMSDAY

CommsDay International
is published by Decisive Publishing

Publisher:

Grahame Lynch
grahamelync@commsdaymail.com

Business Development:

Glend de Leon
Glend@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, Singapore:

Siow Meng Soh
siowmeng@hotmail.com

Correspondent, Kuala Lumpur:

Cat Yong
catyong88@gmail.com

Editor, Australia:

Luke Coleman
Luke@commsday.com.au

For subscription details

contact Hanna Mastelero at
hanna@commsdaymail.com