



INTUG This Week

23 October 2009

Chairman's Update

I am in Seoul at the ICANN meeting as a Board appointed to the Generic Names Support Organisation representing Non-Commercial Stakeholders (such as Education Organisations, Health Organisations, Community Sector Organisations, Consumer Groups). It will be a week of learning about how best I can contribute to the work of ICANN on behalf of end users of the Internet.

INTUG December meeting

The open meeting is on Networked Computing, an international meeting to enable a broad discussion on Unified Communications and Collaboration and Cloud Computing on Wednesday 9 December 2009, Issy-les Moulineaux, Paris. Registration can be made [on-line](#).

Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation (CTO)

The CTO is considering a conference on Cybersecurity next year around June to continue with the work of ITU in GCA. The location could be either Malta or Cyprus.

BELTUG – call for support

BELTUG is exploring the cost of international mobile services and has identified that Tariffs for international calls and SMS's appear to be out of sync with the EU (capped) roaming tariffs. Some users note that it is far more expensive to make an international call (from Belgium to abroad) than it is to make a roaming call. Some national tariffs can even be higher than roaming tariffs. There seems to be no justification or logical explanation for these discrepancies

Beltug is seeking have the support of different countries with examples of similar problems to develop an INTUG wide position. BELTUG will also include the position in the international mobile services position paper being prepared for the December INTUG meeting.

INTUG Executive Director – Nick White

Mobile operators in Europe are stealthily seeking to recover their alleged "lost" income from the latest roaming regulation caps on voice, SMS and data, despite the fact that some studies suggest that lower cost will drive higher volume and produce a net benefit to operators too. One customer reported his national text charge was higher than the maximum cap roaming charge for SMS, with international outbound charges up to 3 times the new roaming cap.

For those parts of the world outside Europe also pursuing regulatory control of excessive roaming charges, be warned. It may be necessary to include in the regulation some protection against operators simply shifting their overcharging to another unregulated area.

If you have any evidence of this practice within Europe, please send details of this to Danielle Jacobs at BELTUG (see above), who is preparing an INTUG White Paper on International Mobile Services. Please send me a copy too, so that I may start another process of representation to redress another mobile market failure.

UK - CMA

In the UK, the regulator Ofcom concluded that BT had overcharged other operators £41.688 million for certain 2Mbit/s trunk services and ordered BT to refund this money with interest. They said they were also concerned that BT may have overcharged for 140/155 Mbit/s terminating segment services and 34/45 Mbit/s trunk services, and will conduct further analysis. This ruling is likely to prompt business customers to also examine whether they are due refunds from their providers in relation to these other services.

NTK – Sweden

NTK will attend the EU Visby agenda (post Lisbon agenda) discussions in the coming weeks on behalf of INTUG

New Zealand – TUANZ

TUANZ is up to its ears writing submissions to various government agencies. One on a review of universal service, a second on ways to deploy a national FTTX network (aerial versus underground, access to land/roads/poles etc, access to government buildings), a third on the special telecommunications needs of rural New Zealand, and a fourth on mobile termination rates.

Indonesia – IDTUG

IDTUG representative Y. Sumaryo (Director IT) and Denny Ak (Legal and Advocation) are attending a Workshop Group Study on Telecommunication Regulation Development which is organized by Directorate of Telecommunication, Directorate General Post and Telecommunication, Ministry of Communication and Informatics in Bandung, from 21-22 Oct 2009.

The issues are:

- MVNO (Mobile Virtual Network Operator),
- NGN transition Regulation, Convergence Law,
- Re-write of Telco industries structures and
- IP based NGN.

There are big differences in view between incumbent (MNO) and the public when considering MVNO implementation as well as competition.

Hong Kong

OFTA released a review report to decide creating a new "Class 3" type of services to replace the PNETS licence under SBO licence.

A consultation paper entitled "Review of the Public Non-Exclusive Telecommunications Service (PNETS) and Services-Based Operator (SBO) Licensing Regimes" was published on 11 March 2009 to seek views and comments from the industry and the public on review of the existing licensing regimes. The Telecommunications Authority ("TA") has decided to create a new "Class 3" type of services under the SBO Licence for replacement of the existing PNETS Licence. The modified licence set out new terms such as licence period, licence fee, licence condition and migration considerations. After the Modified SBO Licence has started implementation, the TA will no longer issue and renew any PNETS Licence. The existing PNETS Licences will remain in force until their next annual renewal date, and similarly for existing SBO Licences.

India – TUGI

India involved in two major activities this week:

1. Position Paper on Tariff Rebalancing to be submitted to the Regulator to bring transparency in tariff costing and stringent parameters for Quality of Services.
2. TRAI has come out with Consultation Paper on "Overall Spectrum Management and Review of License Terms & Condition, which due on 12 November 2009. TUG India is preparing its response. INTUG can also participate in consultation process as it is open process for detail please visit <http://www.trai.gov.in/ConsultationPapers_content.asp>

South Africa

In South Africa, there is a lot happening regarding interconnect charges. The Department of Communications is pressing for reductions in these charges, but users expect it will be a long time before any real call cost reductions follow.

Bahrain

We in the Kingdom of Bahrain are focusing in creating a Consumer Protections Practice and monitor how the service providers are exercising it.

Mexico - AIConsumidor

Mexico's current federal fiscal crisis reached a critical moment this week as the Chamber of Deputies approved across the board tax increases for VAT (15% to 16%), income tax (28% to 30%), on some popular liquid refreshments (beer and tequila), including a 3% levy on all telecommunications services (excepting mobile telephony). As expected, industry pressure groups (AMIPCI, CANIETI) lobbied forcefully against the new telecom service tax, citing the current, notable digital divide (a concept seldom used in their promotional campaigns). The Mexican Senate must ratify or reject these tax increases

soon, and the heated debate continues as we write.

While TWITTER was allegedly employed by 9,000 individuals, sending over 40,000 "tweets" opposing the telecom service tax during the past few days, mobilizing the digital technocracy, no mention has been made of quality of service criteria for consumers, high access costs relative to other national markets, as well as the lack of class action lawsuits on behalf of telecom consumers.

Another key item missing from the current "debate", amid considerable media attention, is the future of the publicly-owned fiber optic network scheduled for some form of "privatization": the national electric power company (CFE) has 22k Kilometers of fiber, mostly in a 36 strand configuration, while the recently "liquidated" Central Light and Power company (another current, major political issue) controls a separate network of undisclosed length and configuration, also scheduled for "privatization".

There are few signs indicating benefits for business and residential telecom consumers will accrue after the dust settles on the 2010 federal budget as well as the future of the fiber optic public network resource. It appears the usual consortia will effectively defend their interests and pass along new taxes to consumers without improving service conditions, ALCONSUMIDOR's strategic focus.

INTUG ATTENDANCE TO CITEL 's SEMINAR ON INFRASTRUCTURE AND REGIONAL INTERCONNECTION AND CCP'S XV MEETING.

For the first time, INTUG attended, as Observer and Collaborator to this event, held in Bariloche, Argentina from Sept. 28 to October 2. A number of topics were addressed such as Regional interconnection in the Americas, ICT deployment in underserved areas or communities, the likely impact of new services, fraud in telecomm services, infrastructure for new generation networks, interconnection and interoperability, international roaming, mainly.

Ing Roberto Martinez Trejo, who collaborates with Alconsumidor AC, kindly volunteered to represent INTUG in Bariloche. He had the chance to speak to Clovis Baptista, Executive Secretary of CITEL, Juan Zavattiero, ITU Regional office Director, and Ceferino Namuncurá, supervisor with the National Commission of Communications of Argentina, among others.

Other participants were regulators and industry representatives from Perú, Argentina, México, Uruguay, República Dominicana, USA, Canadá, Bolivia, Paraguay and Brazil.

They all welcomed INTUG and underlined the importance of its presence in CITEL 's events.

Roberto Martinez downloaded all 138 working documents dealt with during the meeting. None of them are final resolutions, yet they are available (300Mb) upon request to him at roberto@asc-consultores.com