



Islander April 2013

Technology Update

Mobile data networks are responsible for significant economic growth.

A report, undertaken by the mobile industry body GSMA and Deloitte Consulting found that mobile telephony services such as 3G are driving economic growth. The new research has revealed the upgrade to 3G in particular was a significant economic driver. I wonder if moving on to 4G LTE will continue that growth or even accelerate it. I suspect it will accelerate it.

They analyzed over 90 mobile markets and demonstrated that a 10 per cent rise in 3G penetration increases GDP per capita growth by 0.15 per cent. According to the report, the use of mobile data has grown 350 per cent in Western European countries, and on a global scale more than doubled on average every year from 2005 to 2010.

Other findings reveal that, in developing markets, a 10 per cent growth in mobile penetration increases productivity by 4.2 per cent – with “huge” economic potential following the roll-out of mobile data networks.

With regard to 4G LTE the market research firm, Infonetics Research, have released excerpts from their 2012 LTE Deployment Strategies report and it shows that increased average revenue per user (ARPU) is one of the leading expectations of the technology by the service providers, along with spectral efficiencies that will drive down the cost per gigabyte. We have already seen this in practice.

4G LTE Deployment Update around the shores of the Med

We keep being asked what the deployment progress is of 4G LTE for this summer. Currently 3G and HSPA+ is widespread around the coastlines of the Med. There has been a growth of HSPA+. HSPA+ works using 3G technology and is sometimes referred to as 4G. This is not the same as 4G LTE. It is faster than 3G but not as fast as 4G LTE.

Some service providers in the countries bordering the Med have implemented trial services over the last few years such as SFR in Montpellier, so the trails are progressing but to get deployment along the coast will be sporadic for a while yet.

Spain – early days. All operators plan to launch trial services sometime in 2013.

Portugal – all operators launched trial services in March 2012.

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France – Orange & SFR launched trial services in Nov 2012, as mentioned above in locations such as Montpellier and Lyon.

Monaco – Orange/Monaco Telecom launched service in 2012. This is currently our only 4G service of significant use to yachts in the Med.

Italy – Vodafone & TIM & 3 Italy launched trial services in Oct/Nov 2012.

Croatia: VIPnet & T Mobile launched trial services in March 2012.

Greece: Vodafone launched trial services in December 2012.

Turkey: all operators plan to launch services in 2016.

Stunning Bill Shock Shock!

Bill Shock is not usually something to laugh about but this story made me smile. Bill Shock is the term used to describe the issue when you receive a rather large, unexpected telecoms bill. This one happened in October 2012. A French telephone user was sent a bill for 12 quadrillion Euros (yes, that's a real number) – amounting to 6,000 times the yearly economic output of France as a whole. Fortunately, sense prevailed on that occasion and the bill was waived!

New messaging services taking out text messaging (SMS).

Since its first commercial deployment in 1993, SMS has grown to be a key mobile service. It was estimated that 6.1 trillion SMS messages were sent in 2010. The service has also been a significant revenue generator for mobile operators, and in Q2 2012 made up more than a quarter of recurring revenues for operators in the developed world such as Vodafone and O2 (Telefonica) in the UK, Proximus (Belgacom) in Belgium and Optus (SingTel) in Australia.

However, recently SMS volumes and revenues in some mature markets have started to decline in the face of competition from third-party over-the-top (OTT) messaging applications such as WhatsApp, Blackberry Messenger, Facebook Messenger and Apple iMessage. More than 45 percent of smartphone users take advantage of instant messaging (IM) and these over-the-top (OTT) messaging services in addition to using SMS.

A new report from Analysys Mason found that the OTT app WhatsApp is the first large-scale cross-platform messaging app, with nearly 20 percent of smartphone owners using it.

Interestingly they also found different usage trends during the day. Voice usage takes precedence during the working day, with

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traditional voice use trailing off in the evening. Instant messaging and social networking see a spike in use during the evening and nighttime.

The report also found that the cost of SMS and voice services can encourage consumers to use OTT messaging and mobile VoIP services. For example, here in Spain, where the cost of SMS and voice services have been relatively high, one-third of smartphone users use mobile VoIP and 80 percent use IM or OTT messaging.

What would you have? Samsung Galaxy S4 or iPhone 5

There was a big hype in New York this week for the launch of Samsung's new top of the range smartphone. It's significant that Samsung chose Radio City Music Hall, New York, just a couple of blocks down the road from Apple's big New York store, as the venue for their launch!

Below is a basic feature comparison to help to get a handle of what the new Samsung has on-board.

Size

The S4 is bigger than the iPhone 5. I would recommend before making a decision, you should get your hands on both devices to find out which size you prefer.

Build material

The Galaxy S4 is primarily made of the same plastic as the Galaxy S3. The iPhone 5 is made primarily of anodized aluminum.

If you're looking for a premium-feeling build, the iPhone 5 stands head-and-shoulders above the somewhat cheap-feeling Galaxy S4.

Weight

The iPhone 5 is still the lightest. The Galaxy S4 is 16 percent heavier than Apple's flagship.

The flip side this is that the extra 18g nets you a significantly better and bigger screen.

Display

This is where the S4 starts to win. You get an extra diagonal inch of display and over a million extra pixels.

RAM

The Galaxy S4 has 2 GB of random-access memory (RAM) compared to the iPhone's 1 GB.

Storage

Apart from the Galaxy S4's microSD card (expandable to 64 GB), storage options are even.

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Wireless

In regions where 4G LTE is available, both phones should support it.

Samsung will sell a separate GS4 model that maxes out at HSPA+ speeds (relatively fast, but not LTE fast) in select regions. The iPhone 5 will also default to HSPA+ if LTE isn't available.

Battery

The Galaxy S4 looks great on paper. But you can't take battery capacity as an absolute indicator of actual uptime – especially when the S4's battery is powering a display with more than one million extra pixels.

Cameras

Samsung is heavily pushing its software-based camera features in the Galaxy S4. These include Dual Camera (it simultaneously snaps shots and videos with both cameras and lets you overlay one inside the other), Drama Shot (a burst mode that combines the images into a collage), and Sound & Shot (records an audio clip along with still shots).

So a quick overview. What do you reckon? Not a revolution but an evolution. Samsung have worked a lot more on the software rather than hardware improvements in the new S4.

That's all for this month. Please make sure your yacht is all teched-up in preparation for your summer guests. Impress them - don't disappoint them!

Roger Horner of e3 Systems

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