



Islander February 2010 Technology Update

From the Nexus to Uma's Nemesis.

During my break from writing this column in January, I was delighted that Soren Christensen filled this column with a brilliant account of how useful the technology we design, supply and support actually is at sea, especially as seen from the crew's point of view. It makes all the effort feel worthwhile.

Uninterrupted coverage across the Atlantic on VSAT has only been available since May 2009, so the majority of our clients have only just experienced the benefit of the unlimited broadband service this autumn during their crossings to the Caribbean. We have had great feedback from all our clients, with everyone enjoying similar experiences to that which Soren witnessed on Kingfisher.

We will soon be providing an owner, who is crossing to the Caribbean on his yacht, the ability to watch live Sky TV mid Atlantic, as well as continue his business using video conferencing, VPN, email and voice communications, all through VSAT. We look forward to receiving his feedback, and will pass it on.

Antigua Charter Show and Jetstream

During the busiest Antigua Charter Show in years, we demonstrated on board M/Y Kingfisher and ashore in the Copper and Lumber Hotel how you can watch your home local TV live in the Caribbean using the Jetstream service. This drew a lot of interest from owners, charter brokers and crew alike. At that time, we were unable to offer this service with anything less than a 12 month contract, although many potential clients said they would have the service immediately if it were available for a short period, such as a charter, or just for the Caribbean season. The good news is that, thanks to that feedback, we are about to launch a short term Jetstream option, which will be available through e3 and e3 Partners.

So what else is new at the start of 2010? Well 'tis the season for new mobile phone launches. The annual GSM Mobile World Congress starts in Barcelona on 15th February, which always heralds a plethora of announcements of new product and services.

Google "Nexus One" Smart Phone

In mid January, Google unveiled its own-brand 'Nexus One' touch screen smartphone based on its Android 2.1 operating system, manufactured by Taiwan's HTC and powered by Qualcomm's Snapdragon chipset and HSPA technology.

HEAD OFFICE

Palma de Mallorca, Spain

TEL +34 971 404 208

www.e3s.com

FAX +34 971 404 431

info@e3s.com



Google went heavy on the hype during the launch at its Mountain View headquarters in California. "The Nexus One belongs in the emerging class of devices which we call 'super phones,' with the 1GHz Qualcomm Snapdragon chipset making it as powerful as your laptop computer of three to four years ago," claimed Andy Rubin, Google's VP of Engineering.



The internet giant also claims to be offering "a new way for consumers to purchase an Android mobile phone," via the creation of its [own portal](#) through which people can get the device tied to one of several mobile operators or unlocked direct from Google. Nexus One can be bought 'unlocked' from the Google web store for US\$529, or for US\$179 if consumers are prepared to sign up to a two-year contract with T-Mobile USA.

Verizon Wireless in the US, and Vodafone's European operators plan to support the device from Spring 2010 via the store.

Google's move is significant as it marks the first time the company has designed and sold its own consumer hardware device. It is being perceived by industry analysts as a way for the company to defend its online advertising empire as more and more people access the internet using a smart phone.

An interesting point to note is that analysts have said that the Nexus One – which resembles the iPhone – may be the strongest competitor yet to Apple's iconic device. "This is a software company frustrated with making compromises with hardware manufacturers, and which has taken the product bull by the horns," *TechCrunch* founder Michael Arrington told the *BBC*. "When combined with Google Voice, there is no phone on the market today that can touch the Nexus One." Google has also voice-enabled all text boxes on the device, which means that users can put together an e-mail message or tweet by speaking into the phone rather than typing text on the touchscreen.

Take note, yacht captains! This could be your next "must have" phone. Or is it?

HTC tipped to launch Nexus One clone at GSMA Mobile World Congress

Google's new Nexus One Smart Phone will reportedly face stiff competition from a cheaper device, with similar spec, which is tipped to be unveiled at the GSMA Mobile World Congress in Barcelona.

According to a report in *The Guardian*, Taiwanese handset-maker HTC – which also manufactures the Nexus One – is to launch a device called Bravo, which will cost around US\$100 less than the

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FAX +34 971 404 431

info@e3s.com



Google device and will grant mobile operators more control. The existence of Bravo was revealed in a recent leak of HTC's 2010 roadmap. Like Nexus One, the handset is expected to run the latest version of Android and will feature Qualcomm's superfast Snapdragon processor and a 5-megapixel camera. However, unlike Google's phone – which can be bought online and unbundled from a contract – Bravo will be sold via operators in the usual way. The UK's four largest mobile operators are all reported to be looking at offering the device, including Vodafone, Google's official Nexus One partner in the UK.

Was this planned by Google, or did they not dot the i's and cross the t's with HTC?

All five UK networks eye Google Nexus One

All five UK mobile networks are in talks to offer Google's new Nexus One device, according to *The Independent*. Vodafone was the first operator to announce it had sealed a deal to offer the device at the official launch. While no official launch date has been set, Vodafone is reportedly preparing to unveil the device at the GSMA Mobile World Congress in Barcelona. However, all four of Vodafone's UK rivals are also eyeing launches. A T-Mobile UK spokeswoman said the company "expects to make an announcement in the next few weeks," while O2, Orange and 3 also hinted that talks with Google were ongoing. "It looks like Vodafone will lead with it, but everyone has held talks about it," said a source. "It's not like the iPhone, Google wants this in as many hands as possible."

However, none of the UK operators will offer the phone in their own shops because, as mentioned above, Google is selling it exclusively online, with customers selecting which operator they want to support the device. This is a move by Google to increase ad revenues, said the source: "The more clicks on its website, the more it can charge for advertising, whether via computer or mobile."

What other mobile phone news is in the offing?

Other Mobile Phone News

Nokia has just announced they have 80 million internet users! Any numbers to do with the GSM industry are just getting bigger and bigger, and the revenues to be won or lost are so huge that it sounds as if we are just at the start of the legal battle between Apple and Nokia.

This ongoing legal battle escalated again ten days ago as Apple asked regulators to block imports of Nokia phones into the US due to alleged patent infringements. Apple made its request in a



complaint filed with the US International Trade Commission (ITC), reports *CNet News*. The filing was Apple's response to Nokia's earlier complaint to the ITC accusing the iPhone-maker of infringing Nokia patents in "virtually all of its mobile phones, portable music players, and computers," and the latest in a tit-for-tat legal exchange between the two vendors.

Finally, in the mobile phone wireless data sector, 3 Scandinavia claims it will provide a world-first with Ericsson of an HSPA 84 Mb/s service. HSPA is the next step up from 3G and 4G data services. In a statement, Ericsson said the 3 Scandinavia deal will bring the world's first 84 Mb/s HSPA network nationwide to Denmark and four major cities in Sweden. 3's network in both countries currently provides theoretical maximum download speeds of 21 Mb/s. Of course, real-life results are much lower.

I often write this column whilst travelling, depending on my wireless data connection. Today I am in the English countryside, 40 miles from central London and only have GPRS data available - no wifi, no 3G, no VSAT, no cable. It is so slow – it takes me back to the old days! We have all become complacent about fast download speeds, and now our Scandinavian friends will be even faster, having done their emails, surfed the net, and done their day's work before we get out of bed in Mallorca!

We will be off to the World Congress in Barcelona next week, no doubt to be blown away by another batch of technological marvels. I will be hunting Uma. Sadly this is not Bill's nemesis, but yet another acronym, this time for Unlimited Mobile Access technology!

Roger Horner of E3 Systems

For further information on any of the above, please contact us. email on info@e3s.com and website www.e3s.com
Tel: +34 971 404208/400738/702975