

## NUMBERS

**73,000,000**

▶ **...METRIC tons** is the estimated volume of so-called e-waste by 2015. According to Pike Research it will then begin to decline as recycling initiatives and practices catch up with the production rate of electronic goods.

**29,000,000,000**

▶ **...USD IS THE** is the sum China's three mobile operators plan to spend during 2009 to roll out 3G services.

**1**

▶ **...JPY TRILLION** is the amount Japan's four major mobile operators expect to spend over the next five years rolling out next-generation networks. Known as 3.9G in Japan, the new networks

will use LTE technology. The four operators plan to limit capital spending by using existing 3G facilities and equipment, on which the providers spent JPY 5 trillion. NTT DoCoMo, which aims to launch LTE in 2010, has earmarked JPY 300-400 billion over the next five years. Softbank Mobile plans to follow in 2011 and 2012, while Emobile and KDDI are eyeing service launches in 2011 and 2012, respectively.

**2,000,000,000**

▶ **...EUR IS** is the amount the European Commission hopes to save consumers in mobile call costs by imposing new caps on termination rates – the wholesale fees operators charge each other to connect a call from another network.

## P2P solves medical problems

▶ **THE PRACTICE** of monitoring patients over data networks remains limited to niche applications. One concern is that a centralized computer may not be able to cope with incoming data from perhaps thousands of patients.

A team of scientists now suggests tapping into the power and efficiency of peer-to-peer (P2P) networks. The

team claims that their recent tests demonstrated that a continual and unintrusive heart monitoring application could be developed into a working e-health system quickly, simply and at low cost using P2P.

The solution is described in an article for the International Journal of Computer Applications in Technology. ●

## Swine flu promotes telework

▶ **RESEARCH FIRMS** Gartner and the Telework Coalition are saying that the swine flu outbreak highlights the need for companies to have a teleworking strategy in place; though, the increasing use of mobile capabilities in the workplace may actually alleviate the need for a very formal teleworking strategy. The Federal Communications Commission in late 2008 held a panel that brought together communications firms to discuss how US companies might respond in the event of a pandemic. ●



## EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

# Don't be afraid to be dumb – it may be creative

▶ **AFTER ALL** the talk about mobile operators' fear of becoming "dumb bit-pipe" providers, it turns out that mobile broadband, as pure connectivity, is profitable all the way from the dongle to the bottom line. In this issue we've got real business-case figures to prove it.

But let's not stop there. A large chunk of this issue is devoted to business creativity; how to get more out of what you've already got.

There is so much brilliant technology out there. It's rarely the limiting factor to improved profitability. An even greater challenge than technology, especially in times of economic recession, is to channel an overabundance of communications resources into good use, and find new combinations of usage. That's when we have to focus on business creativity.

**FOR TELECOM,** IT could mean helping other industries evolve, as explained in the article about the radical change that utilities must undergo to help us all become the smart energy consumers that the future will demand. We also have an example of mobile operators making the completely opposite move: becoming electric energy providers. Why not? Airlines can teach us a lot because their industry has interesting similarities to ours. MTN has picked up on this and started selling airtime in a creative way.

Looking at how Wal-Mart (Sunil Mittal's new partner) and other leading retailers connect to their customers can inspire operators to take a proactive stance in the battle of mobile device platforms against the challenge from strong consumer brands. Mittal, by the way, is living proof that you don't need expert knowledge yourself, but rather business creativity, to turn telecom into a multibillion-dollar operation – from scratch.

**THERE IS OFTEN** a distrust of creative people, because they don't come up with smart answers by cleverly deducing from vast pools of empirical data, systematically analyzing everything. Creativity is the reverse process, but equally important for any business strategy. Creative people often surprise us, giving unexpected answers to questions we sometimes didn't even know how to formulate. Recent internet history has proven again and again that stellar business success can be created by "dumb" people, completely ignoring conventional wisdom.

How do we make creativity happen? Well, if it could be planned for and ordered about, it probably wouldn't be real creativity. But we know how it works from looking at art, literature, and music. The likes of Arnold Schoenberg, Vasily Kandinsky, André Breton, and James Joyce were all dedicated rule-breakers. And so was a founder of our own industry: the giant Nicola Tesla, always at odds with the establishment.

**THERE IS** much to be said about the importance of seeing things in a different light.

Sometimes it's daring to ask dumb questions or invite strangers to the party.



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