Regulatory and Standards Activity News

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FCC Names Six Members to its Technical Advisory Council

The Federal Communications Commission has announced the appointment of six distinguished members to its Technical Advisory Council (TAC). The newly reconstituted TAC held its first meeting in December 2010 and identified a number of areas where FCC action could stimulate the nation's broadband evolution benefiting both innovation and job creation. These areas include 1) opportunities for greater infrastructure sharing among different industry sectors, such as: smart grid and healthcare; 2) reducing impediments to construction of next generation infrastructure; 3) ensuring that the nation's Internet continues to evolve competitively to next generation features such as IPv6; and 4) providing incentives for accelerating the retirement of legacy technologies and systems. The new Technical Advisory Council members are:

Shahid Ahmed—Mr. Ahmed is the global lead for the Wireless Technology Consulting Practice and manages the North American Practice for the Accenture Cisco Business Group. Mr. Ahmed has spent more than 15 years helping enterprise and mobile operators worldwide achieve high performance operation.

General Wesley Clark (U.S. Army, ret.)—Chairman and CEO of Wesley K. Clark and Associates, a strategic consulting firm. General Clark is a senior fellow at UCLA's Burkle Center for International Relations and, in addition, serves as Chairman of Rodman and Renshaw Investment Bank. General Clark will serve on the TAC as a representative of Tiversa, a leading company in P2P intelligence and security services.

Paul Mankiewich—Mr. Mankiewich is the former CTO of Americas for Alcatel-Lucent and is now Chief Architect, Mobility Solutions for Juniper Networks. He has received numerous awards for wireless innovation and has published more than 80 papers on the subject.

John Marinho—Director, Enterprise Mobility Solutions, Dell, Incorporated. In his current role, Mr. Marinho is responsible for bringing end-to-end wireless solutions to market. He also held leadership positions at several companies including Bell Laboratories, where he was the recipient of the Bell Labs President's Award for Innovation. He holds multiple patents in the field of communications technology.

Deven Parekh—Managing Director, Insight Venture Partners. He was previously a Principal at Berenson Minella & Company, a New York based merchant banking firm. Prior to Berenson Minella, Mr. Parekh was with The Blackstone Group, where he was involved in both M & A advisory and principal activities.

Russ Gyurek—Office of the CTO, Cisco Systems, where he leads the Global Technology Leadership Team under Padmasree Warrior, Cisco's CTO. In this role, Mr. Gyurek manages multinational, multidisciplinary teams driving broadband policies and technologies for the Internet.

FCC Address Telecom Access for the Disabled

As part of its ongoing efforts to implement the "Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act of 2010" (CVAA), the FCC issued three Notices of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRMs). The CVAA has modernized existing communications laws to ensure that people with disabilities are able to share fully in the economic, social, and civic benefits of broadband and other 21st century communication technologies.

The first of the three FCC CVAA-related NPRMs approved by the Commission seeks comment on the following:

· How should the FCC implement the requirements of Section 104 of the CVAA, which would ensure that manufacturers of "advanced communications services" (ACS) equipment make their devices and products accessible to people with disabilities.

· Are there steps that the Commission should be taking to enhance its enforcement and recordkeeping procedures for manufacturers and providers.

· With section 718 taking effect in 2013, what steps can the Commission and stakeholders take to ensure that ACS manufacturers and service providers are working to make mobile phone Internet browsers accessible to people who are blind or visually impaired?

The FCC approved a second NPRM that seeks comment on reinstatement and modification of the video description rules originally adopted by the Commission in 2000. Video description is the insertion of audio-narrated descriptions of a television program's key visual elements into natural pauses in the program's dialogue, to make

television programming more accessible to people who are blind or visually impaired.

Finally, the FCC approved a third NPRM to implement Section 103(b) of the CVAA, which mandates that the Commission extend participation in and contribution to the Telecommunications Relay Service ("TRS") Fund to interconnected and non-interconnected Voice over Internet Protocol ("VoIP") service providers. Although interconnected VoIP service providers already contribute to the Fund under Commission rules, this would statutorily codify that practice, and further extend this obligation to non-interconnected providers.

Europeans Also Act on Disabled Access

The three European Standards Organizations, CEN (the European Committee for Standardization), CENELEC (the European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization) and ETSI (The European Telecommunications Standards Institute), have reacted to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities by establishing a Joint Working Group (JWG) on "eAccessibility" to provide a unified response. During Phase 1 of Mandate M/376, which finished in 2009, national procurement authorities acknowledged that they lacked the specialist human factors knowledge necessary to include accessibility requirements in invitations to tender for the public procurement of ICT products and services.

In order to tackle this issue, standardization work during Phase 2 of M/376 will have an objective to fill in the identified gaps with a set of functional accessibility requirements. The expected outcome of this work is a new European Standard (EN) that will include the functional accessibility requirements applicable to all ICT products and services, intended to be used for conformity assessment in procurement processes, as well as the development of an electronic toolkit to make use of harmonized requirements in a procurement process.

Recent IEEE Standards Activities

The IEEE Standards Association (IEEE-SA)Standards Board has approved the development of draft standard IEEE P2200™, "Standard Protocol for Stream Management in Media Client Devices." IEEE P2200 will enable the delivery of rich media content such as high-definition or 3D video, games, music, books, and magazines to portable devices in a way that is not limited by cost and bandwidth. IEEE P2200 will leverage local storage and intelligent content caching to relieve network congestion and accelerate delivery to mobile devices. This will increase the efficiency of delivering bandwidth-intensive content, allowing end users to consume it when they are ready while bypassing common data delivery pitfalls.

The IEEE-SA has also approved IEEE 1888™, "Standard for Ubiquitous Green Community Control Network Protocol." IEEE 1888 will help large commercial buildings to use less energy and have a smaller environmental footprint through remote surveillance, operation, management and maintenance, all of which will provide a secure, comfortable and convenient environment for building residents. IEEE 1888 combines information technology and communications with environmental protection and energy savings. It is designed for use in a wide range of industries including utility, construction, transportation, automation, commerce, and agriculture for the development of innovative digital eco-cities, intelligent buildings, modern transportation systems, and digital homes.

Two standards for wireless access in vehicular environments have been approved. The first is IEEE 1609.3™, "Standard for Wireless Access in Vehicular Environments (WAVE)—Networking Services," which defines services in support of wireless connectivity among vehicle-based devices, and between fixed roadside devices and vehicle-based devices using the 5.9 GHz DSRC/WAVE mode.

The second standard, IEEE 1609.4™, "Standard for Wireless Access in Vehicular Environments (WAVE)—Multi-Channel Operation," describes multi-channel wireless radio operations, WAVE mode, medium access control (MAC) and physical layers (PHYs), including the operation of control channel (CCH) and service channel (SCH) interval timers, parameters for priority access, channel switching and routing, management services, and primitives designed for multi-channel operations.

The final IEEE 1901™ Broadband over Power Line (BPL) standard was finalized in December 2010 and is now published and available for purchase or through the IEEE Xplore Digital Library. Sponsored by the IEEE Communications Society, this globally recognized BPL standard is designed for use in a wide range of applications including smart energy, transportation and Local Area Networks (LANs) in both the home and the enterprise.

Networking products that fully comply with IEEE 1901 will deliver data rates in excess of 500 Mbps in LAN applications. In first-mile/last-mile applications, IEEE 1901-compliant devices will achieve ranges of up to 1500 meters. The technology specified by IEEE 1901 uses sophisticated modulation techniques to transmit data over standard AC power lines of any voltage at transmission frequencies of less than 100 MHz.

EU Begins M2M Standard Activity

In the Fall of 2010, ETSIs M2M workshop drew over 220 attendees from around the world, making it the most popular ETSI workshop to date. Delegates were left in no doubt that M2M is a sector which will see massive growth, even if the range of potential applications is still hard to imagine, and the business cases have yet to be established. Among the diverse applications presented at the workshop were the use of M2M in support of rural farming, "Connected Home" uses, and its potential evolutions in fleet management systems.