Global Communications Newsletter

March 1998

Latin America: New Directions in Telecommunications

Bruno S. Vianna, Past Chair of the Latin-American Committee

Different approaches are used in different countries, but there is a general move toward a competitive telecommunications environment, in opposition to the state monopoly which is still the rule. Yes, but the changes come faster and faster. The ability to invest in the telecommunications infrastructure increases when private companies take over. In Bolivia, the jump was 23-fold from 1995 to 1996. This also means a faster increase in telephone density, which is still very low. The highest density was achieved by the new operator Telefonica in the south of Argentina: 21 lines/100 inhabitants. In a small market like Chile, eight companies are fighting for local telephony and eight for long distance. Brazil has a new telecommunications act that opens to competition all the services in the country, which will be divided into three big regions for local services and ten regions for cellular services, starting each cellular region with two competitors (A band, to be privatized, and B band, born private, now starting operations in the first region). The B band concession for the metropolitan region of Sao Paolo was sold for US$2.4 billion, with no network in place.

Total investments in telecommunications increased in the 1994–1996 timeframe, from US$3 billion to $7 billion, and will reach US$10 billion in 1998. On the other hand, cross-subsidies will no longer survive. The tariffs are increasing for local service and decreasing for long distance and international service, which is facing high competition from North American carriers. For the low-income layers of the population, access to telephone services was difficult due to the lack of investment, and also often to the high fee to subscribe to the service, but the charge for local service in many cases was very inexpensive. The new scenario will bring with time higher service availability at higher prices for local services and lower prices for long distance.

As more and more international operators come to provide services in Latin America, there is also a trend to bring in their global suppliers, which means a big challenge for the suppliers of national technologies. For the global suppliers, countries like Brazil now can represent the first choice in market potential, taking into account factors such as telephone density, population, and GNP per capita, which explains their increasing presence in the region.

For IEEE Communications Society activities, this may also represent a growing opportunity, since there is a bigger demand for telecommunications professionals in the market, already perceived by the universities. The demand for telecommunications events is also growing. Under the new structure of ComSoc, the Regional Directory for Latin America will follow, stimulating the participation of the telecommunications community from this Region. There are several major conferences to be held in the region in the near future. International Telecommunications Symposium (ITS) is a regional event that started in 1990 and is held every two years, alternating between Brazil and other Latin American countries. It has a deep technical program and brings distinguished experts from all over the world. Plan to attend ITS '98, in Sao Paolo, Brazil, 9–13 August; papers were accepted through 10 February. See http://lcs7.lcs.poli.usp.br/ITS98, or direct any questions to its98@lcs.poli.usp.br. GLOBECOM is coming to the region for the first time: GLOBECOM '99 will be in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. ITS '2000 is still open for proposals to be hosted outside Brazil.

Last October a Distinguished Lecture Tour was conducted in the Latin America Region. The lecture was given by Steve Weinstein, President of ComSoc, in Colombia, Peru, and Brazil, and was organized by Dr. Jose Roberto B. de Marca, Vice President of Member Affairs. Now you can find information about us at our Web site, http://www.cpqd.br/lac/. Unfortunately we are not yet serving Brazilian or Colombian coffee over the Web, but we would be delighted to address your other needs. Come visit us! Join the LA Region Team and give us your feedback. Contact Leonor Wilches-Chaux, first LA Region Director, at rgcintel@impsat.net.co or myself at brunosv@cpqd.br.

3rd Asia Pacific Conference on Communications (APCC '97)

7-10 December 1997

Sydney Convention and Exhibitions Centre

Darling Harbour, Australia

By Fanny Su Beh Noi, Singapore

The 3rd Asia Pacific Conference on Communications (APCC '97) was held in conjunction with the Australian Conference on Optical Fibre Technology (ACOFT) and the Australian Telecommunication Networks and Applications Conference (ATNAC). The event was sponsored by the IREE Society, Australia, and co-sponsored by the Communication Group of IEICE, Japan, the Korean Institute of Communication Science, and the IEEE Communications Society.

The International Steering Committee, Local Organising Committee, and Technical Program Committee consisted of many of our IEEE Communications Society volunteers. The conference had an international flair, attended by 450 participants with 326 papers presented from 26 different countries.

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IEEE Membership Development Progress Report – December 1997

Maria D'Alessio, Administrative Assistant, IEEE Membership Development

End of November IEEE Membership Statistics

The total IEEE membership as of the end of November 1997 was 313,653, an increase of 7007 or 2.3 percent over November 1996. We believe the year-end goal of 316,000 total members will be more than achieved. Society membership growth for November was up 4172, 1.2 percent over November 1996 for a total of 361,339.

In November, we had 1163 new applications for higher-grade membership, an increase of 13.7 percent over November 1996. New Student member applications for the same period were 3244 as opposed to 2076 for the same month last year, an increase of 56.3 percent. Lower dues rates are having a salutary effect on new Student applications. In Regions where the dollar exchange rate and/or local taxes have made the dues relatively expensive, such as Canada, the dues reduction's effect has been dramatic. In Canada we have seen a 200 percent increase in Student applications this past month as compared to November 1996.

Online Applications Growing in Popularity

Last month, the IEEE Member application became available on the Web. Word has barely gotten out; yet after one month, 400 applicants have used this form to apply for IEEE membership. Also, 452 Students have applied for membership using the Web. Make sure you advertise in all IEEE newsletters, announcements, and publications that IEEE membership applications are now available online.

Vietnam Telecomp '97/Vietnam Broadcasting '97
2–6 December
Giang Vo Exhibition-Fair Centre, Hanoi, Vietnam

By Fanny Su Beh Noi, Singapore

The final delegates were:

Vijay Bhargava (1994, 1995 VP for Regional Activities, Invited Speaker)
Lin-Shan Lee (VP–International Affairs for Communications Society)
Roberto Saracco (Invited Speaker)
Satchandi Verma (Invited Speaker)
Teo Tat Khai (Active Volunteer)
Fanny Su Beh Noi (Manager, IEEE Asia Pacific Operations Centre/Communications Society Office)

We attended:

1) The opening Ceremony on the morning of 2 December and, later in the evening, dinner for participants of Vietnam Telecomp '97 at the Friendship Cultural Centre.

2) The opening ceremony of the REV Academic Activities week at the Hanoi University of Technology on the morning of 3 December.

3) A series of talks presented by ComSoc invited speakers at the 3 December afternoon session at the Giang Vo Exhibition-Fair Centre.

4) A dinner given by REV on the evening of 3 December for delegates of the Academic Activities week at the Lake View Hotel.

Our purpose was to reestablish contacts and relationships with the Vietnam Radio Electronics Association of Vietnam (REV) and to assist them in the possible establishment of an IEEE Section/Chapter in the near future. The REV association consists of key personnel from state-owned enterprises, industry, and academia.

Telecomp '97/Vietnam Broadcasting '97 had about 150 overseas participants/exhibitors displaying telecommunications, computer, networking, and broadcasting equipment and services.

Dr. Linh expressed his thanks for the two cartons of promotional

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The URLs for Member and Student member applications are as follows:

- Member Application: http://sandbox.ieee.org.9200/apply/ (you can get to this URL from the join link on the IEEE Home page at http://www.ieee.org)
- Student Application: http://sandbox.ieee.org:9100/apply/

Graduating Student Members Can Now Update Their Member Record Information More Easily

When IEEE Student members graduate, membership becomes even more important in keeping them informed of the latest technical and professional developments, and keeping their careers on track and moving forward. For many Student members, graduation means moving, and not just moving once but often moving several times in that first postgraduate year. With all that moving, sometimes these members forget to keep IEEE informed of their latest mailing address and are eventually lost to IEEE. Written notices are mailed to these members prior to graduation asking them to update their records. But now IEEE makes that easier to do with the graduation record information now available online.

To provide IEEE with their latest graduation information and mailing address for publications, announcements, and services, graduating Student members can now use the Web at http:/www.ieee.org/ra/gradupdate.html.

For many graduating Student members, continuing membership also means discounted dues payments for up to four years. To be eligible for the graduated student dues discounts, you must have begun IEEE membership as a Student and maintain active membership without interruption. Discounted dues years are measured from the year that the baccalaureate or first professional degree is received for a maximum of four years or until a Ph.D. is received.

Farewell and Thanks

I have been deeply honored to have served these past three years as the Chair of the IEEE Membership Development Committee (MDC). I want to thank all of you within the IEEE who have worked with the MDC during my tenure, and all who have adopted or contributed ideas and practices that have helped us recruit new members, retain our current members, and recover former members. The *Membership Newsletter* itself is an example of one of our outreach efforts.

Special thanks must go to the many IEEE technical Societies, their Presidents, and MDC chairs who have enthusiastically supported the idea of an annual Membership Development training and planning session, and who have wholeheartedly become involved in membership initiatives. As a former Society President, I have enjoyed the many spirited e-mail discussions that put forth the various Societies' views on how they and the IEEE in general should best serve our members.

I must also convey gratitude to the IEEE Board of Directors, and especially Vice Presidents Ray Findlay and Vijay Bhargava, who made membership development, and student recruiting and retention, a major focus. Their support was

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The IEEE ComSoc European Operations Corner

By Jacques Kevers, Brussels

Brussels Office: Staff Complete Again!

Veerle Tribout was hired on 1 December, filling the position that was vacant since November 1. Veerle worked previously at the Brussels airport and speaks fluent English, Dutch, French, and German. With her onboard now, the Brussels staff is complete again. She will mainly be in charge of data entry for membership applications as well as for IEEE product orders.

Distinguished Lecturer Tour

Contacts are being taken now in order to try to set up a Distinguished Lecturer Tour in Region 8 during the first half of 1998. DLT is a service provided by the Communications Society to the local Chapters and their members. On request of these Chapters, lecture tours can be arranged and funded. Main guidelines in this respect are as follows:

- In any given year, no two tours should be arranged in the same region.
- The local organizers may be a local Chapter, a local Section, organizers of a local conference, or a local group of members who might potentially form a new Chapter.
- Funding for a distinguished lecturer presentation is only provided if that lecturer can combine a tour with at least three presentations, addressing different groups in different locations. Individual lectures are not funded.
- Funding usually covers the lecturer's airfare costs, while local organizers should fund local expenses. The lecturer must not profit financially from the lecturer tour.
- Subjects covered include, among others, history of communications; cellular and mobile communication systems; communication network and service management; enterprise networking; coding, modulation, and signal processing for telecommunications; local distribution technologies; wireless communication networks; intelligent networking; high-performance networking; multimedia networking technologies; satellite-based communication systems; communication networking protocols and issues; wireless in-building networking technology; and issues in designing large communication internetworks.

A list of possible lecturers, with their respective fields of expertise, can be obtained on request from the Brussels office.

Conferences

One of the aims of EAMEC (Europe, Africa, Middle East Committee) is to encourage the submission of papers from Region 8 authors to the major ComSoc conferences. A detailed statistical analysis of conference papers per country/area revealed that 26.3 percent of all accepted GLOBECOM '97 papers were submitted by authors from 20 countries belonging to IEEE Region 8. Together with contributions from Latin America and the Asia-Pacific region, more than 50 percent of the authors came from outside North America.

The Brussels office had various contacts with the organizers of a workshop on Communication Networks to be organized in May 1998. Formal application for Comsoc Cooperating Support was completed. More information on this event will be provided as soon as the request has been approved.

The office is currently contacting all organizers of ComSoc sponsored, co-sponsored, and technically co-sponsored or cooperating conferences that will take place in Region 8 during 1998. The aim is to make sure that information material about Communications Society membership and publications will be made available to the attendees. For Melecon '98, ComSoc's Brussels office plans to be more closely involved.

If you are organizing similar events in 1998 and are interested in ComSoc sponsorship, you are more than welcome at the Brussels office, where we will provide you with relevant information and support in completing the formal application documents. Organizers of Society sponsored events can also obtain from the office lists of e-mail addresses or mailing labels to be used for the promotion of the event.

Report from IEEE Communications Society Victoria Chapter

By Enn Vinnal and Craig Skinner, Australia

The Victoria, Australia, Chapter of the IEEE Communications Society has significantly increased the number of activities it has organized in 1997. In addition, the Chapter has been working hard to increase its level of publicity and member contact. This year has seen six talks by a diverse group of speakers, including the Distinguished Lecturer Professor David Goodman; the Chair of an Australian Government Information Industry Taskforce; the Director of an Australian University Research Centre; and even a lawyer talking about crime in the digital age. The Chapter also offered a successful one-day course by Professor fred harris (for those who do not know Professor harris: yes, his name *is* correct when not capitalized!) on innovative DSP techniques.

The success of these events has been enhanced in a number of ways. The Chapter has provided pre-seminar refreshments which encourages professional networking. An excellent suggestion by Fanny Su, of the Singapore IEEE regional office, was to produce high quality posters for display at meetings by making laminated color enlargements of some *IEEE Communications Magazine* covers. The events have been used to selectively distribute the IEEE Communications Society magazines and journals to potential members; the issues were provided free by ComSoc to its Chapters.

The Chapter committee has made good use of all meetings to distribute membership brochures and application forms to the many non-members coming to these events. It will be interesting to see, at the end of the year, what increase in membership has occurred in ComSoc in Victoria!

As you might have expected, the crucial element to the success of any event is its publicity. This year, the Chapter started a Web page (http://www.dgs.monash.edu.au/~ieeevic/comsoc/) to facilitate communication with members and potential members. This site is kept updated with details of upcoming events. The Chapter was also able to expand its e-mail member contact list using data provided by headquarters to the local Section. The Chapter is currently able to contact about 70 percent of its members with electronic mailouts. The Chapter has also established contact with a major metropolitan newspaper, which has published articles on a number of the seminars, mentioning the local Chapter.

The Chapter committee would be interested in hearing from any IEEE Communications Society members planning to visit Melbourne, Australia, who feel they can offer a seminar that would be of interest to our local members. Please feel free to contact either Enn Vinnal (e.vinnal@ieee.org) or Craig Skinner (c.a.skinner@ieee.org) to discuss details.

IEEE Membership Development/*(Continued from page 2)*

very much appreciated by the MDC as a body, and by me personally.

The MDC initiated a major campaign to target recent graduates. Our Graduates-of-the-Last-Decade (GOLD) program, and a corresponding IEEE-USA Young Professionals program, were ably championed by David Kemp and John Reinert, with the great support of many dedicated GOLD members, and Carol Coffey of the IEEE staff. These programs have energized a underrecognized group of IEEE members and will provide our volunteer leaders of the future.

Lastly, a very special thanks must be given to Jill Berman Levy, who is the consummate professional. Jill has been the engine within the IEEE staff that made the MDC successful. She has taken the directives of the MDC and polished and implemented them, often in near-real time. And she carried out these creative duties in addition to her major membership managerial role within the IEEE.

We have much to be proud of within MDC. Overall membership has finally begun to grow. We have reversed the decline of membership within the United States, and continued our impressive growth outside the United States. The lowered student dues appear to be attracting a record increase in student members. So I can leave my post at the MDC with a sense of pride for a job well done, not just by me, but by all of my MDC colleagues within the IEEE! On behalf of the IEEE, I thank you for your help and support.

Charles J. Robinson, D.Sc., P.E.
Chair, IEEE Membership Development Committee

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A publication of the
IEEE Communications Society

Vietnam Telecomp '97/*(Continued from page 2)*

materials on the IEEE publications and standards that we have donated to REV as reference material. The publications were displayed in the REV booth at Telecomp '97. He also indicated that they would be interested in translating some of the publications into Vietnamese and will get back to me with the titles if they wish to pursue it.

Prof. Nguyen Van Ngo has requested assistance for IEEE references to apply for IEEE Senior membership for himself, Mr. Thanh, and Prof. Dr. Nguyen Dinh Ngoc. Lin-Shan Lee and Vijay have kindly agreed to be their references. I have sent the IEEE Senior membership forms for them to fill in and will be coordinating the application for them.

The presentation was well received and attended by the above REV personnel with simultaneous Vietnamese translation of the technical presentations "Frontiers in Communications" by our ComSoc invited speakers.

According to Dr. Linh, the average income of graduate engineers is 1M Dong (about US$100/month). Directors of state-owned enterprises, e.g., AEC earn about 3M Dong (about US$300/month) with 1M Dong (US$100/month) bonus for performance. There are about 5,000 engineers in Vietnam. State-owned enterprises or companies pay for the membership dues of their directors. Students receive a small stipend each month from the government for their studies and are heavily supported by family. However, top students are normally sent overseas on scholarship fully funded by the State. Engineers are considered middle class professionals in Vietnam society.

Due to heavy work commitments, our delegates were unable to stay through the end of Telecomp '97 or participate in the REV academic week.

In summary, it will be a couple of years before Vietnam catches up with the rest of Asia. However, we'll continue to keep in touch with REV personnel and to encourage their development.

APCC '97/*(Continued from page 1)*

The International Steering Committee kindly provided us with a booth at no additional cost to promote the IEEE Communications Society. We also provided a selection of more popular IEEE publications for sale at the booth. Experience has now taught us that most conference attendees do not wish to purchase additional thick books since it would mean more weight to add to the conference materials they have to carry back. Publications on sale at conferences should be of the latest edition, the current year of publication, and relevant to the conference topics.

Most attendees are currently IEEE members. While they enquire about IEEE membership, the sign-on rate on the spot is minimal because applicants require personal information and time to fill in the application forms, and prefer to do so at their leisure.

However, the exposure for the office was invaluable since members were able to refer and relate to our office for future assistance in their memberships and IEEE-related matters. I was also able to establish contacts with IREE personnel and to meet up with our key APC Communications volunteers: Tetsuya Miki, Tomonori Aoyama, and Naoki Ohta.

In the future we will work with the Cooperative Display Programme coordinator to better customize the materials for the conference.