

Global Communications Newsletter

February 2008

The Global Communications Newsletter Is Back!

By Stefano Bregni, Editor

Dear Readers,

It is with much pleasure that I introduce this first issue of the new series of the *Global Communications Newsletter*. I am grateful to Tom La Porta, former Director of Magazines for the IEEE Communications Society, for his trust in appointing me the honor to serve as the new Editor of the Newsletter, and to all Board members who are supporting me.

The Newsletter appeared monthly within each issue of *IEEE Communications Magazine* for a number of years. It was surely well appreciated by readers, due to the effort and commitment of my predecessor Nicolae Oaca and of all Regional Correspondents. Nicolae will continue to help as a Regional Correspondent. I also count on his experience and suggestions in my first steps as Editor.

Let me introduce the Regional Correspondents that accepted to serve: Bin Hu and Rajan Dinesh (USA), Nicolae Oaca (Romania), Milan Jankovic (Serbia), Artur Lason (Poland), Marko Jagodic (Slovenia), Hossan Afifi (France), José María Malgosa-Sanahuja (Spain), Jacob Baal-Schem (Israel), Jose Luis Vazquez Gonzalez and Carlos Hirsch (Mexico), Ivan Armuelles (Panama), Jose-David Cely (Colombia), Helio Waldman (Brazil), Ram G. Gupta (India), Qian Zhang (Hong Kong), and Borhanudin Mohd Ali (Malaysia). Their responsibility will be to ensure appropriate coverage of all IEEE Regions, by providing timely and interesting contributions from all Chapters and other regional entities.

By resuming publication of the *Newsletter*, we aim to better serve the global communications community. The *Newsletter* will provide an excellent opportunity to present news and events related to communications around the world, as well as activities carried out by



IEEE Communications Society Chapters in greater detail.

In general, articles published in the *Global Communications Newsletter* will not be technical papers or technical surveys. Rather, they will be short articles informing the IEEE Communications Society community about various activities carried out and organized in the four corners of the world by the many volunteers who are the true engine of the Society. Many Chapters organize interesting

events several times a year: let our world community know about that! Also, major news from telecommunications regional industry, operators, and academia may be of great interest to our global community. Examples of suitable articles we plan to publish are highlights from local ComSoc conferences, reports of Distinguished Lecturer Tours, reports of other technical events organized by IEEE Communications Society Chapters that may be of international interest, and updates on regional telecommunications markets

I invite all Chapter officers, as well as all ComSoc volunteers, to plan to start immediately submitting such articles to the *Global Communications Newsletter* according to our guidelines. You can submit your contributions to the most appropriate Regional Correspondent or directly to me (email: bregni@elet.polimi.it). The format of submission should be a simple email, including title, possibly a short abstract (< 50 words), and your article attached (normally from 300 to 1000 words).

The relevance, timeliness, and interest of reports published in our *Newsletter* will depend on your cooperation. The willingness of everyone to contribute timely and informative reports are essential to ensure our success. We look forward to receiving your submissions.

Report on the TELSIS 2007 Conference

By Bratislav Milovanovic, Serbia

The 8th International Conference on Telecommunications in Modern Satellite, Cable, and Broadcasting Services — TELSIS 2007 was held at the Faculty of Electronic Engineering in Nis, Serbia, September 26–28, 2007. The Conference is organized by the Faculty of Electronic Engineering, Nis, and the National Society for Microwave Technique and Technologies. It was organized under the technical co-sponsorship of the IEEE MTT Society, IEEE Communications Society, IEEE AP Society, and IEEE Region 8, and in cooperation with IEEE Section of Serbia and Montenegro, IEEE MTT Chapter and Communications Chapter of Serbia and Montenegro, as well as with the National Society for Telecommunications and Society for ETRAN. The conference was also supported by the Serbian Academy of Science and Art, Academy of Engineering Science of Serbia and Montenegro, Ministry of Science, and Ministry of Telecommunications and Information Society.

The total number of papers, including invited keynote ones, scheduled for presentation was 135. The papers covered a wide range of topics: satellite communications, mobile communications, classical cable and optical communications, multimedia communications, antennas and propagation, RF and microwave technique, electromagnetic compatibility, digital signal processing, broadband wireless access, telecommunication networks, modulation and coding, Internet technologies, new telecommunication technologies and services, and more. The regular contributing papers were selected from the submitted papers according to the opinion of at least three members of the International Review Board. The conference program was organized within one plenary, 12 regular, and eight poster sessions. In almost every session, besides the regular papers, at least one invited keynote paper was presented. Authors of the papers were scientists from 27 countries all over the world. All papers scheduled for presentation were published prior to the conference. The Proceedings, composed of two volumes and accompanied by a CD-ROM, were distributed to all registered participants. It is important to note that the Conference Proceedings will be distributed by the IEEE Conference Publications Program.

In addition to the presentation of papers, there were many other activities. Two round tables were held, one concerning the accreditation of higher education institutions and academic curricula, and the other on digital radio broadcasting in the Republic of Serbia through 2015. Furthermore, two workshops were organized. The first one, entitled “Advances in Microwave and Optical Tech-



Opening session. Chair of the conference, Prof. B. Milovanovic, giving the welcome speech. Seated at the dais, left to right: Chairmen Profs. B. Kim, S. Maas, A. Marincic, and T. Berceli.

nology and Design,” contained two lectures given by Prof. S. Maas, Applied Wave Research, Inc., United States, and Prof. T. Berceli, Budapest University of Technology and Economics, Hungary. The second workshop, held in Serbian and organized in cooperation with the Serbian Engineering Chamber, consisted of presentations of the newest telecommunication systems in modern business buildings in Serbia. Additionally, a presentation of several scientific journals as well as commercial presentations of leading Serbian ICT companies took place. Three professional meetings were held: a meeting of the Executive Committee of the IEEE Section of Serbia and Montenegro, a meeting of the IEEE Women in Engineering Chapter of Serbia and Montenegro, and a meeting of the Serbian Society of Cable Operators, YU Cable.

As in previous years, besides the technical scientific activities, the conference program included several social events: a reception by the rector of the University of Nis for the invited authors, a concert in the symphonic orchestra hall, the Conference banquet, and a sightseeing tour.

TELSIS 2007 gathered many people who work in the field of telecommunications, and provided them with good opportunities for discussions, experience exchange, and making new contacts. Conference attendees emphasized that both the professional part of the conference and the organizational part left very good impressions. The TELSIS conference has been evaluated as a leading scientific conference in the field of modern telecommunications technologies in central and southeastern Europe. In addition, participants said that they enjoyed a very pleasant atmosphere and outstanding hospitality during the Conference.

Activity Report for 2006–2007 from the Asia Pacific Region

By Daehyoung Hong, AP Director

The Asia Pacific (AP) region is recognized as one of the most active regions in terms of academic and industrial activities in communication technologies. As of 15 October 2007, we have 9122 ComSoc members in the AP region, served by the 31 ComSoc Chapters that organize local activities. The 31 ComSoc Chapters can be found in Australia, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Pakistan, Singapore, Taiwan, and Thailand. Links to the ComSoc Chapters are available at http://www.comsoc.org/~apb/regional_activities/ and <http://ewh.ieee.org/ecc/r10/>, respectively.

We did our best to activate Asia Pacific Board (APB) functions and provide better services to all AP regional members. We had many excellent activities in 2006–2007, such as the AP Regional Chapters Chair Congress (AP RCCC) in 2007, the 3rd Asia-Pacific Young Researcher Award, Student Travel Grants (STGs), 2007 Chapter Achievement Award, Distinguished Lecturer Tours (DLTs) in the AP region, APB Home Page Update, and the APCC 2007 Best Paper Award.

AP RCCC was held on 15 March 2007 in Hong Kong, in conjunction with IEEE WCNC '07. The number of attendees was 27, including ComSoc President Nim Cheung, ComSoc VP — Membership Development Byeong Gi Lee, ComSoc Director — Marketing Robert Shapiro, AP Director Daehyoung Hong, one APB officer, and 17 of the 28 AP Regional Chapter Chairs.

The APB selected the 3rd Asia-Pacific Young Researcher Award in 2007. The winners are Dr. Phone Lin (Taiwan) as Best Young Researcher, and Drs. W. Choi (Korea), H. Harai (Japan), and H. F. Lu (Taiwan) as Outstanding Young Researchers, respectively. The awards were presented at the APB meeting at IEEE GLOBECOM '07.

Twenty-six students won STGs from AP region in 2007, that is, one, three, two, eight, two, and ten students for NOMS '06, WCNC '06, INFOCOM '06, ICC '06, SECON '06, and GLOBECOM '06, respectively. At the end of 2006, this program was transferred to the Meeting and Conference Board of Membership Services, and STG winners were selected by each conference in 2007.

In 2007 the activity of each Chapter was evaluated by the ComSoc Membership Development Director more clearly based on various items such as membership growth, involvement of the communications industry in Chapter activities, full-day seminars organized, symposia or conferences, response to the annual ComSoc questionnaire, Chapter financial reserves, reports of five officers (Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer, Secretary, and Membership Development), number of technical meetings, participation in a DLT, IEEE report returned on time, and so on. As a result, I am happy to say that the IEEE ComSoc 2007 Chapter of the Year Award winner was the Taipei Chapter. Please join me in congratulating the Taipei Chapter for their excellent work.

We had 11 DLTs in the AP Region in 2006–2007. The list of ComSoc Distinguished Lecturers and their topics can be found at <http://www.comsoc.org/socstr/memprog/dislec/dislec.html>. More information on the DLT Program can be found at <http://www.comsoc.org/socstr/memprog/dislec/index.html>. The APB Home Page at <http://www.comsoc.org/~APB/> is frequently updated, and includes recent AP newsletters, Activity Reports, Conference Calendar, Statistical Analysis & Report, Distinguished Lecturer Tours, Technical Specialist Database, and other items of interest.

For the first time, APCC Best Paper Awards were issued jointly by IEEE ComSoc APB, and ComSoc Sister Societies in the AP Region, such as IEICE (Japan) and KICS (Korea). The Asia-Pacific Conference on Communications (APCC) was run jointly by IEEE ComSoc APB and ComSoc Sister Societies in the AP Region,

including IEICE (Japan), KICS (Korea), and CIC (China). APCC '07 Best Paper Award Winners were Piyaporn Krachodnok and Rangsan Wongsan (Thailand), Jingbo Dong, Qing Chen, and Zhisheng Niu (China), and Takayasu Kaida and Junru Zheng (Japan).

In 2006–2007 three new chapters were formed in the AP Region: the Kansai ComSoc Chapter (formed 5 December 2006), Madras ComSoc Chapter (formed 26 April 2007), and the Shanghai ComSoc Chapter (formed 22 August 2007). The number of Chapters is now 31 in the AP Region, and we are in the process of forming more new Chapters to provide better service to our members in this active region: five in China, four in India, and two in Vietnam.

Prof. Byeong Gi Lee was elected to Vice President — Member Relations in the 2007 IEEE ComSoc elections. It is also my pleasure to inform you that the APB Nomination Committee (Chair: Iwao Sasase) selected Prof. Zhisheng Niu as the next AP Director in 2008–2009 and recommended this to the ComSoc President. I am sure that APB activities will grow even further under their leadership.

Finally, as AP Director in 2006–2007, I would like to take this opportunity to deliver my deep appreciation for your strong support for these two years, and sincerely ask for your continued support for APB activities.

Portability in Mexico

By Carlos Hirsch, Mexico

On September 2007, COFETEL, the Mexican Regulatory Authority, finished the last draft of the portability rules. If there are no legal impediments (injunctions or “amparos”), and possibly subject to minor changes, in 2008 Mexico will start offering telephone customers the possibility to keep their number when they change carriers in the same local area and within the same type of service. The four types of telephone numbers in Mexico are fixed, mobile calling party pays, mobile receiving party pays, and no geographic (i.e., 800 or 900). It is important to point out that there is no country with mobile calling party pays allowing portability between fixed and mobile services because the caller loses track of which rate he/she must pay.

In the Mexican Telecommunications Law of 1995 there is a paragraph making portability mandatory when the Regulatory Authority considers that it is technically and economically feasible. Instead, the trigger for portability was a vague agreement designed in the name of the convergence process but as a trade-off between fixed telephone and TV cable companies. The Mexican government allowed TV cable companies to offer telephone service, and promised interconnection and portability in exchange for modifying Telmex concessions to eliminate the restriction on offering TV services imposed with privatization.

Portability is the kind of topic that can be very simple or extremely complex, depending on the point of view you assume. The simplest side is to consider portability a customer's right and a quick way to increase competition. On the other side, the most complex issue is how to certify the user's ownership of the number. There is valid concern about preventing a potential problem similar to slamming, but with a different flavor. Almost 70 percent of Mexican telephone customers are prepaid, so there are no bills or documents to prove a customer's rights over a line.

The Mexican solution will be “all call query” from the beginning, with a central database administrator (DBA) with

(Continued on next page)

The New Spanish National Plan for Scientific R+D+I

By Pilar Manzanarez-Lopez and Josemaría Malgosa-Sanahuja, Spain

Scientific research, technological development, and innovation are, without any doubt, key factors in both the economic growth of a country in the long and medium term, and the welfare of its citizens. In order to improve R&D efforts and reduce the gap between the EU and its major competitors, the European Council met in Barcelona in 2002, and agreed — among other objectives — that the overall budget on R&D in the EU should be increased to 3 percent of the GDP by 2010, and that two-thirds of the new investment should come from the private sector.

In spite of the efforts made by different administrations, Spain is still far behind the leading European countries. Recently, the Spanish government developed the VI Spanish National Plan for Scientific R+D+I for the 2008–2011 period. Interestingly, the plan increases the budget to 48 billion, which is double the investment of the 2003–2007 period.

The structure of the new plan is based on the definition of six instrumental action lines (Human Resources, Projects, Institutional Strengthening, Infrastructures, Use of Knowledge, and Articulation and Internationalization of the System) that will be developed by 13 National Programs. The major difference from the organizational structure of previous plans is that the new one switches from a model with a thematic organization to an instrumental plan. The main goal is to finance investigation of quality independent of the thematic

area to which the research is related. All the instrumental action lines are oriented to achieve the following objectives: the generation of knowledge, scientific, and technological capacities; the increase of cooperation within the R+D system; and finally, technological development and innovation.

Defining the new Plan, Spain hopes to promote continuous training within the area of knowledge and mobility (both geographic and institutional) of researchers and engineers. Therefore, the plan will finance actions focused on the hiring of researchers and assistant staff dedicated to R+D administration management. On the other hand, with the objective of taking advantage of the peculiarities of the Spanish Autonomous Regions, the Plan promotes the creation of at least one outstanding scientific infrastructure in each of them devoted to exploiting the particular strength of the Region. These singular infrastructures will promote the scientific and technological development of the Regions where they are established. They will be co-financed 50/50 by national and regional governments. For example, according to this action, two separate scientific infrastructures will be created in the Region of Murcia: a marine research observatory that will offer high-level services to economic sectors related to the ocean, and an investigation platform of water resources to study the sustainable use of water and land, water reusability, and water supply.

Cooperation between national and regional governments is also a crucial strategy of the Plan. Both governments cooperate during the design of the plan as well as in the management of the National Programs, thus involving the regional administrations in the model for decisions and the co-financing of the actions. Similarly, the new plan intends to improve international cooperation with special emphasis on Europe and Latin America.

Another important novelty of this plan is the creation of a single point of contact using a Web site, a tool that will contribute to simplifying both access to grants and the management processes. In addition, to increase system efficiency, a single form (valid for all calls of any national program) will be created, and the number of announcements will be substantially reduced.

The plan defines various strategic areas that are the framework of the instrumental actions. One of them is the Information Technology area. The main objective for this is that investment in technology, applications, services, and contents related to Information Technology, expressed as a percentage of the GDP, converge with the EU average value in 2010, thus increasing from 5.75 percent in 2005 to 7 percent in 2010.

PORTABILITY IN MEXICO/continued

technical and administrative functions. There will be no connection between carriers, and all transactions will occur through the DBA. Technically, the DBA will be in charge of preparing a daily file with all changes, and telecom companies must update the networks every night. In the administrative field the DBA will validate the customers' requests and solve simple disputes between carriers. The novelty in this process is the personal identification number (PIN). A customer requesting to change a number should call the DBA and send the PIN from the line involved in the process. Normal changes will take two business days.

If it happens on schedule, Mexico will be the first country in Latin America to have portability in place. Next year we will comment on the results of this process.

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