



April 2008

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## :: 2008 ACOMMS: Communications Alliance and Comms Day Awards

*By Helen Bailey, Commercial Manager, Communications Alliance*



Nominations have opened for the Australian communications industry's premier awards, the ACOMMS, with eight categories reflecting the changes sweeping the sector.

The ACOMM Awards, presented by Communications Alliance and Communications Day, recognise excellence delivered to consumers, business users and the industry by individuals, service providers, carriers, technology partners, consultants and third party suppliers.

In keeping with the new realities created by the convergence of telecommunications, media and information technology, the awards have been re-focused from the telco space to embrace the wider communications sector.

The ACOMMS will this year be awarded to companies which have excelled in industry **leadership and innovation** (large and SME categories); **professional services**; **customer service** (large and SME); **partnerships for growth**; and **environmental responsibility**. The awards will also recognise a **Communications Ambassador**, an outstanding individual who has promoted the industry's interests during the preceding year.



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Nominations for the awards close on 30th May 2008. Full details of the awards and criteria are available at [http://www.commsalliance.com.au/the\\_acomm\\_awards](http://www.commsalliance.com.au/the_acomm_awards).

The judging panel for the 2008 awards includes: Anne Hurley (Communications Alliance); Grahame Lynch (Decisive Publishing); Malcolm Alder (KPMG); Paul Brooks (Layer 10 Consulting); Tony Chan (Green Telecom); Kim Denham (Australian Computer Society); Chris Hancock (AARNet); Graeme Innes (HREOC); Peter Kell, (Choice); Karl Mallon (Climate Risk); Mark McDonnell (BBY); Andrew Parker (PricewaterhouseCoopers); Lars Rasmussen (University of South Australia); Noel Robertson (Matrixview).

The ACOMMS will be announced and presented at the Communications Alliance Annual Dinner at The Four Seasons Hotel, Sydney on Wednesday 6 August. Bookings for this year's event are being accepted now.



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## :: New Members

Communications Alliance is pleased to welcome the following new members:



**mBlox Pty Ltd**

<http://www.mblox.com>

mBlox enables businesses to deliver and bill for mobile services and content around the world while simplifying the commercial and technical complexities involved. mBlox specialise in global operator connectivity and mobile billing.



Mobile Business & Entertainment

**Netsize Pty Ltd**

[www.netsize.com](http://www.netsize.com)

Netsize Group is a provider of mobile business and entertainment solutions. Netsize helps companies implement wireless services aimed at maximising revenues, improving brand awareness, optimising business efficiency and developing public services.



**TMG Asia Pacific Pty Ltd**

[www.tmg-company.com](http://www.tmg-company.com)

TMG is a provider of mobile content services. TMG covers the entire mobile value chain, from the technical development of applications to content development with partners and the management of marketing and CRM services. TMG specialise in developing and promoting unique mobile content on TV, internet and print.



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## :: Call for Suggestions for Research Projects

The Board of Communications Alliance has approved the establishment of the Communications Alliance Research Program.

Commencing from 1 July 2008, the Research Program will undertake agreed research topics with a focus on forward-looking fact-based research on issues relevant to the development of the broadband IP-enabled convergence environment.

The relevant topic areas for the research program cover the wide range of technical, operational, economic, social/consumer-related areas pertinent to the broadband world.

Members of Communications Alliance and readers of Communicate are invited to submit suggestions for inaugural research projects for 2008-2009 to [e.harland@commsalliance.com.au](mailto:e.harland@commsalliance.com.au).

### **About the Comms Alliance Research Program**

The broadband network deployments being undertaken or about to be undertaken in Australia create unparalleled opportunities for the development and delivery of advanced IP-based applications and services. These applications and services will fundamentally impact the social and economic lives of all Australians.

In order for Communications Alliance to be pro-active in identifying areas of work for the industry to transition to and operate in the broadband IP-enabled convergence environment, fact-based forward-looking research is essential.

This research will supplement and enhance the input which Communications Alliance currently receives from all the Advisory Groups constituted at Communications Alliance from time to time (eg NRP, ORP, CECRP, CIRP), from targeted Communications Alliance discussion events, as well as through external fora such as the Communications Alliance/ACMA Consumer Dialogue and ACMA Consumer Consultative Forum.

The research output may be used to guide the pro-active work of Communications Alliance, and may also be made available as independent industry advice for Government and regulators.

The research program topics are expected to be aligned with priority topics identified in the Communications Alliance Strategic Plan, Works Plan and Policy Focus 2008 (as revised from year to year).

Opportunities for joint research and partnerships will be investigated.

A Communications Research Panel (CRP) will be established to oversight the program, recommend topics and allocate priorities, and ensure deliverables are met. Membership of the CRP will be for a period of 1 year.



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## :: Lessons from history

By Anne Hurley, CEO, Communications Alliance

The recent release of the Request for Proposals (RFP) for the National Broadband Network (NBN) has once again highlighted division and discord within our industry.

Rather than seeing the NBN as an unparalleled opportunity for our nation and the industry as a whole, many media commentators have analysed the RFP only in terms of the competing interests of the various potential bidders. It's all about who will win, who will lose and what will it mean for the companies concerned.

In that sort of environment how do we look beyond the immediate horizon and achieve outcomes that are inclusive and productive?

As the CEO of our industry's peak representative body I am a fervent believer in focusing on the future and in the power of collaborative processes. However I think that it's instructive to look back through history and at other industries to learn from those who have successfully dealt with similar difficult situations.

In that context I recently did a bit of research into the origins of industry collaboration – the guilds.

A development of pre-industrialised societies, the guilds were associations of artisans within the same trade. Guilds provided mutual support for the members' interests, maintained standards of workmanship and promoted ethical conduct.

The oldest evidence of guilds was credited to Numa Pompilius, King of the Romans, who in the sixth century BC united various groups of artisans to benefit the entire community.

Together with mutual aid, the honour of the craft defined the purpose for which guilds existed. There was a sense of pride in the special techniques and skills known only to their members as well as pride in the excellence of the finished product.

These same objectives -- promoting industry pride; excellent products and services; ethical behaviour; coming together to achieve successful outcomes – have driven the growth of our modern industry associations around the world ever since.

Not only has it benefited the individuals and their industries, but it has ensured the best outcomes for their customers and their communities.

It's a proven model that has withstood the trials of history for centuries. What worked for medieval weavers and potters centuries ago, still works in the high technology business environment in which we operate today.

What's just as instructive is to see how the key success factors are common across diverse industries.

If you do a Google search for "Key success factors for industry associations" you will hit on some work undertaken by Australia's organic food industry groups.



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Their advice on successful organisations falls into two categories: structure and behaviour.

Under the heading of "Structure" their advice includes the following:

- Avoid fragmentation of industry and industry bodies;
- Do not delay updating your organisational structure to fit your climate;
- Have a commercial structure, attitude and board for your organisation;
- Have one industry voice to government, but balance this with the ability to keep your own voice within the industry;
- Ensure your organisations are clear about their fit into the industry, the market and the "big picture".

Under the heading of "Behaviour" their advice includes:

- Do not wait for everyone to reach a consensus before acting;
- Play the ball, not the person;
- Master "the art of the achievable";
- Know what everyone is doing and what impact it has on your goals;
- Avoid an adversarial attitude of the organisation towards government;
- Do not let politics overcome original goals;
- Respect the diversity of views in your industry;
- Timing is everything.

Although it's difficult to imagine a greater dichotomy of interests between the two sectors, I would argue those principles are as valid for the communications industry as for organic food producers.

Just as it is a sobering check-list for industry organisations and their members, it also serves as a timely reminder for individual players in their relationships and actions while we navigate the current period of turbulence.

## :: The Telecommunications Consumer Stakeholder Forum

*By Josh Faulks, Manager, Policy and Government Relations, Communications Alliance*

The Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, Senator Conroy has announced that the Telecommunications Consumer Stakeholder Forum will be held in Canberra on Thursday 1 May 2008.

### **What does the Minister want out of this Forum?**

The stated objectives of the Forum are to examine the effectiveness of the current consumer representational model and to explore a range of options that will provide consumers with the strong voice they need. The Minister also refers to giving consumers a more powerful and effective voice and to providing better consumer protection.



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## Is the Forum necessary and are the objectives commendable and achievable?

The Forum and its objectives deserve in-principle support. It provides an invaluable opportunity to rethink the consumer representational model in Australia. It is particularly timely in the context of the fundamental transformation to a broadband converged world.

However we should be cautious. Discussion should be grounded in reality and fact with a clear focus on outcomes and not processes. We need to be looking to the future and the best possible model, not dwelling on dissatisfaction with current processes.

### Context is important.

While focus should remain on the future, the extent of current consumer engagement should not be unnecessarily dismissed and criticised. Consumer engagement in the telecommunications industry is extensive and pervasive in nearly every aspect of policy making and code development. The mere fact that we support looking at the model should not mean we acknowledge that the current system is completely 'broke' and we are not doing enough already. It merely means we think there is room for improvement and we want to be part of the solution.

### It is not all about the supply side.

Whilst it is acknowledged that the telecommunications industry has a responsibility to provide for effective consumer engagement, representatives also have an obligation to adequately contribute.

We need clarity about whom consumer representatives and groups purport to represent so that the industry can target responses to particular sections of community. We need to know that they are appropriately authorised by their constituencies. We need representatives that have the skills and training to be effective and able to add real value to the process. It should always be about the outcome for the consumer.

Communications Alliance will be making a submission and will be attending the Forum. We will work with consumer representative groups and the government to improve the consumer representational model in Australia. It is important that the industry seeks to be part of the solution so as to maximise the opportunity to strengthen the voice of the consumer and build on the demonstrable collaborative successes of the self-regulatory model.

## :: Guiding Standards development

*By Mike Johns, Project Manager, Communications Alliance*

The Customer Equipment and Cable Reference Panel has overseen many changes in Standards development brought about by the evolving area of telecommunications technical regulation in its 10 years of operations. When the *Telecommunications Act 1997* was implemented, the equipment supply side of the industry had to come to terms with a different set of regulatory powers underpinned by a suite of mandated technical Standards and a new compliance regime.

At that time a number of guidelines were developed to assist Working Committees in their understanding of what standards for customer equipment should or could encompass and the compliance arrangements for suppliers to follow. These guidelines covered the following areas:



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- requirements for protecting network integrity
- interoperability of equipment with telecommunication networks
- requirements for equipment used with a standard telephone service
- ensuring that equipment supported emergency service access
- how to choose compliance levels for testing equipment against the Standards
- recommendations to the regulator when submitting Standards for adoption

Ten years down the track Working Committees are now faced with an ever increasingly complex environment, having to come to terms with an expanding range of customer equipment that can be connected to PSTN networks and digital networks (such as ISDN and more recently IP-based networks supporting, for example, VoIP services).

Although our Working Committees are generally well versed in the machinations of standards development, there is always scope for educating new entrants into the processes and more importantly addressing the evolving regulatory, technical and commercial environments.

A Working Group has been charged to review the current suite of Working Committee Guidelines for developing Standards. Early discussions have already raised a number of interesting and potentially challenging areas for consideration, including:

- the expectations of how interoperable customer equipment should be with an increasing variety of services and applications in addition to telephony
- the expectations of how compatible customer equipment should be from network to network
- support for the standard telephone service (STS) and more fundamentally what is expected of an STS into the future in an IP-based environment
- how to address switching and signalling and transmission performance when considering the newer IP-based networks
- changes to regulations, such as for emergency call services
- what level of testing and demonstration of compliance is required in a global market where most equipment is imported into Australia
- the advent of increasingly available and adopted industry proprietary Standards
- the delineation between network equipment and customer equipment, particularly when considering digital services and the applications that run over those services
- the role for greater guidance for industry in addition to a mandatory suite of customer equipment Standards
- other areas which have not traditionally been addressed by customer equipment Standards in a digital environment, such as security, privacy and data integrity

Many of these issues have common threads that cross many of the activities of Communications Alliance. The Customer Equipment and Cable Reference Panel would welcome any comments that you may have regarding the review of its guidelines. Comments can be sent to Mike Johns at [m.johns@commsalliance.com.au](mailto:m.johns@commsalliance.com.au).



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## :: Communications Alliance publishes VDSL2 Standard

*By James Duck, Project Manager, Communications Alliance*

Communications Alliance published in April a new Australian Standard that defines the requirements for the latest generation of broadband modems using DSL technology in Australia.

This new technology is referred to as 'VDSL2' and is an abbreviation for the second version of Very high speed Digital Subscriber Line. It continues the progression from the various forms of Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Line (ADSL) technology currently in widespread use in Australia (i.e. ADSL1, ADSL2, ADSL2+).

VDSL2 modems are an important enabler for the introduction of faster broadband services than are generally available today. The use of VDSL2 technology is particularly important in a network operating with a Fibre To The Node (FTTN) architecture. This is because the higher data rates on VDSL2 are gained on shorter line lengths - which are typical in a FTTN network than in a traditional exchange based network. A FTTN network is one of the likely outcomes of the anticipated government tender for a new broadband network.

The full title of the new Customer Equipment Standard for VDSL2 modems is "AS/ACIF S043.2:2008 Requirements for Customer Equipment for connection to a metallic local loop interface of a Telecommunications Network - Part 2: Broadband". It is available from [http://commsalliance.com.au/documents/standards/S43.2\\_08](http://commsalliance.com.au/documents/standards/S43.2_08).

Communications Alliance will be submitting the Standard to ACMA for making as a Customer Equipment Standard under section 376 of the *Telecommunications Act 1997*.

## :: Telecom Italia Australian Workshop

*By Joe Tang, Project Manager, Communications Alliance*

In this month's article we examine the message from Telecom Italia's Australian workshop, where delegates from Telecom Italia presented to Australian mobile carrier representatives at the Communications Alliance office.

Telecom Italia forecast a world wide market shift that will threaten the telecommunications industry if it does not change its business philosophy. Following is a summary of Telecom Italia's message.

### **New Business Model**

Given the rapid development of technology and market shift where consumers want more user-generated products, the opportunity is for carriers to provide telecommunication capabilities to third parties, with the insight to encourage application development and to promote this new ecosystem. The new business model proposed by Telecom Italia would allow for partnering with third parties in what are currently closed traditional markets. By partnering with third parties, carriers would in turn extend their businesses to new and non structured markets. The proposed model dubbed the "Long Tail" business model would see carriers reaching out to large number of micro services that each cater for a narrow group of consumers.



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## The rationale behind the new business model

### *Web platforms and Web 2.0*

By combining global reach, large investments and the Web 2.0 culture shift, web platforms are emerging as one of the dominant competitors that could present a large challenge to the telecommunications industry. Web companies are forecast to further grow substantially in the coming years and it would appear that these web companies would invariably intrude into the traditional carrier customer base, leaving telecommunications carriers with a smaller slice of the market share.

Some examples of web companies that have recorded large growth in recent years are Skype, Google, Facebook.

### *Traditional Carrier Business Model*

Traditionally carrier business models generally involve a narrow set of core services that serve a large consumer base. In contrast, the web companies utilise a "web as a platform" approach, they provide applications, usually free of charge, and by exploiting the advertising business model, aim to reduce carrier connectivity to the consumer.

## :: Calendar

### Events 2008

- *The ACOMMS 2008* : Sydney – 6 August 2008

### Standards published in April 2008

- *Customer Access Equipment for connection to a Telecommunications Network* : AS/ACIF S003:2008
- *Voice frequency performance requirements for Customer Equipment* : AS/ACIF S004:2008
- *Requirements for Customer Equipment, operating in the voiceband, for connection to the non-switched Telecommunications Network* : AS/ACIF S006:2008
- *Requirements for connection to an air interface of a telecommunications network — Part 1: General* : AS/ACIF S042.1:2008
- *Requirements for Customer Equipment for connection to a metallic local loop interface of a Telecommunications Network - Part 2: Broadband* : AS/ACIF S043.2:2008
- *Requirements for Customer Equipment for connection to a metallic local loop interface of a Telecommunications Network Part 3 DC, low frequency AC and voiceband* : AS/ACIF S043.3:2008

### Guidelines published in April 2008

- *Supporting Arrangements for AS/ACIF S042 Requirements for connection to an air interface of a Telecommunications Network* : CA G548:2008



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## :: About Communications Alliance

Communications Alliance was formed to provide a unified voice for the Australian communications industry and to lead it into the next generation of converging networks, technologies and services.

Communications Alliance offers a forum for the industry to make coherent and constructive contributions to policy development and debate.

By providing leadership on new trends and directions, Communications Alliance fulfils a vital unifying role on behalf of the industry and its members, particularly in areas of competition, innovation and industry development.

The prime mission of Communications Alliance is to promote the growth of the Australian communications industry and the protection of consumer interests by fostering the highest standards of business ethics and behaviour through industry self-governance.