

# The mobile future on show at 3GSM

Players in the mobile communications sector take the stage to discuss the merits of 3GSM versus WiMax, writes **Keith Humphreys**

» About 50,000 of the expected 60,000 visitors turned up to attend the 3GSM Congress recently and visit the 1,300 stands, which also featured a dedicated mobile entertainment and content zone.

The presence of the major networking vendors was notable, with Cisco and Juniper present to promote their IP multi-protocol label stitching infrastructure solutions for mobile service providers. Indeed, technology-savvy mobile providers are all going down this route – Vodafone, PCCW, Verizon and the like – to enable IPTV on hand-held devices.

Arun Sarin, chief executive of Vodafone and Mike Zafirovski, chief executive of Nortel, used different panels at the congress to argue the merits of 3G versus WiMax. Zafirovski told a keynote audience that 3G is not good enough to meet wireless broadband demands. Although it is worth noting that Nortel completed the sale of its UMTS business to Alcatel-Lucent last year.

Sarin enjoyed his position on the panel of the opening keynote and announced a \$1.1bn deal to gain the majority share in the Indian mobile phone operator Hutchison Essar, tapping into an emerging market where only 13 per cent of the population have mobile phones.

Sarin went on to say that the industry must also get up to speed with Long Term Evolution (LTE) – the process of developing 3G technology – or risk WiMax players cutting in on traditional mobile territory.

“We have to be faster in execution. As an industry it takes a long time to get things done... we need to move faster or others will eat our lunch,” he said, referring to standardisation and clearing up the ambiguity over mobile TV, IP and mobile advertising.

In response to a question about WiMax from the audience, Sarin said that while it may well be a commercial reality in some markets, it still has a way to go to become “prime time”.

However, WiMax was given a boost when Sprint Nextel announced plans to deploy a nationwide Mobile WiMax service in the US, using its 2.5GHz spectrum.



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Keith Humphreys,  
EuroLAN

Zafirovski also has great hopes for WiMax, one of the technologies he refers to as 4G, which promises access speeds of up to 100Mbps.

“4G will enable true wireless broadband, giving users the same bandwidth experience they currently can get with fixed-line high-speed access,” he said. “This industry has done a great job driving 2G and 3G, but WiMax, LTE, code division multiple access (CDMA) Revision C, and mobile video technology is essential for delivering the required wireless broadband experience.”

Last year, Steve Pusey, Nortel’s head of Eurasia, hailed high-speed downlink packet access technology, the latest iteration of 3G, that has the potential to achieve up to 14Mbps as the saviour for Nortel – Pusey then left to join Vodafone.

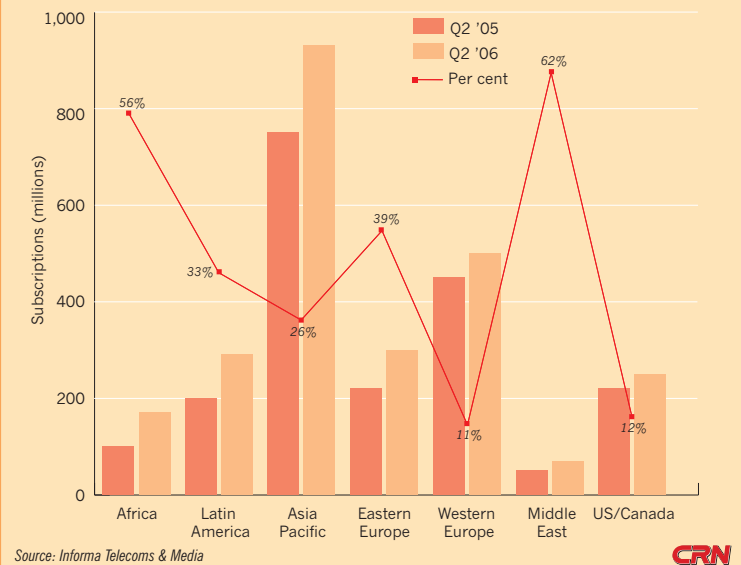
3G has been disappointing, according to Simon Beresford-Wylie, chief executive designate of Nokia Siemens Networks, which is set to be created before the end of March. Beresford-Wylie said that, while there might be more than 100 million 3G subscribers now, it’s surprising that 3G has not been a great success. “It has not lived up to expectations,” he said.

Beresford-Wylie will oversee all the operations of Nokia Siemens Networks, outlined at 3GSM, and described the product roadmap as moving from a “telecoms to internet rhythm”. **CRN**

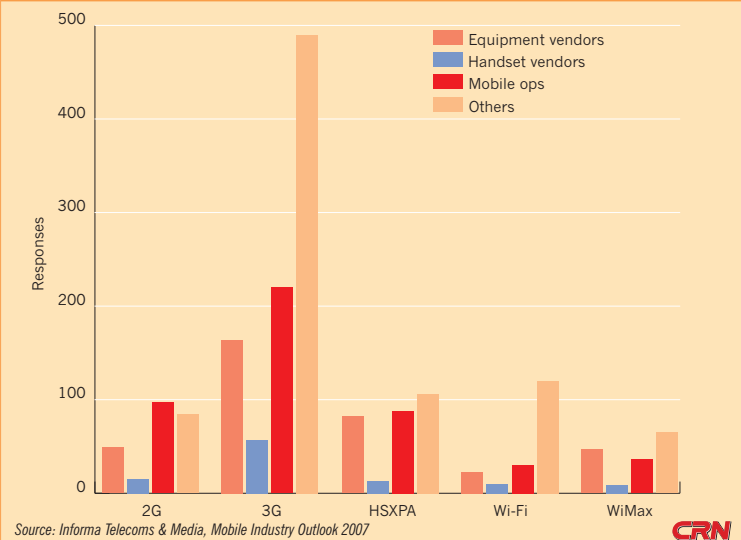
» Keith Humphreys is managing consultant at EuroLAN.

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