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Industry survey - Analysis of new substantial industry-wide survey
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New players - Within the telecommunication realm including Google and Apple

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Virgin Mobile Faces Opposition Over Charity Campaign – USA

Virgin Mobile USA's charity program in partnership with National Network For Youth (NN4Y), a Washington D.C. group of over 150 homeless youth focused organisations, to collect clothing for homeless youth has come under strong criticism from some of the NN4Y member organisations. The web campaign from Virgin Mobile named 'Strip2Clothe' asked people to upload their striptease videos online, and promised to donate a new piece of clothing for every five times the video was viewed. However, after the backlash, the campaign has been temporarily shut down.

Corinne Nosal, spokesperson from Virgin Mobile, in an interview said: "At this point, we are not pulling the site, this issue [of homeless youth] is really important to us, we've had over 12,000 hits for the site so far, and we want to continue to raise awareness for this important issue".

While it is very laudable of Virgin Mobile to donate to a charitable cause the idea of incorporating stripping and children in the same thought piece is misguided and it is strange that not one marketing executive put consideration to this before launching the campaign, even if the stripping is only by adults.

Yemba Launches As An MVNO – Cameroon

Yemba, a mobile telephony company owned by Providence Technologique, was launched in Cameroon during a press conference held on July 8, 2008 in Yaounde. According to Yemba's General Manager, Michel Nguetsop, Yemba is the first MVNO to operate in Cameroon and the second in the entire African region after Morocco.

According to Yemba's officials, the company has partnered with CAMTEL and would be following CAMTEL's initial code numbers. Expressing optimism on the untapped potential of the market, they stated that there are over four million mobile phone subscribers in Cameroon and MVNOs are a new innovation in the mobile telephony market. According to Yemba, the 'call box' sector generates monthly revenue of FCFA 8 billion (USD 19.85 million) and they hope to tap two million subscribers by 2010. The officials also stated that the company will be running its own billing system, producing its own SIM cards and managing the in-coming and out-going calls of their subscribers.

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O2(SM) Wireless Inks Distribution Pact With Debisys – USA

O2(SM) Wireless, an MVNO offered by Locus Telecommunications, has partnered with Debisys, a division of Emida and a leader in global prepaid/value transfer market, to sell O2(SM) Wireless in more than 10,000 Debisys' retail affiliates.

Charles Callis, Vice President of Corporate Marketing at Debisys, said: "The O2(SM) Wireless product, with its simple and pure cellular service, truly makes life easier. Their key Free International calling feature to Mexico and other prominent Spanish-speaking countries really complements our focus on the Latin demographic and further creates a seamless partnership on both ends."

Commenting on the agreement, Pete Grubb, Vice President of Sales & Marketing at Locus Telecommunications, said: "We are excited to partner with Debisys and to further expand our retail presence in the prepaid market. We understand that having a great product is only part of the equation, the other key part is the distribution partnership. This partnership with Debisys provides us with an excellent distribution opportunity to reach our specified target markets and beyond."

TracFone Attempts To Stop Mobile Phone Traffickers – USA

TracFone Wireless, a prepaid MVNO, is gearing up to prevent mobile phone traffickers from buying their low-cost phones and altering the software making the handsets work on any network worldwide. The company has estimated losses worth millions of dollars due to these practices since it sells these phones at a discount in the anticipation of generating revenues from customers when they purchase airtime for the phone.

TracFone has filed 39 lawsuits, most of them in South Florida, in an attempt to stop companies and individuals from trafficking its mobile phones. The company has received 15 court orders to stop the unlocking and resale of phones and has also received USD 4 million for the damages.

Diemo To Use XIUS-Bcgi's Platform In MVNO Operations – Venezuela

Diemo, a real-time mobile banking service provider, has selected XIUS-bcgi Mobile Services Platform, a next-generation convergent platform for MVNEs, MVNOs and new mobile telecom providers, for the launch of its MVNO services in the South American region for a consideration of USD 15 million. Moreover, XIUS-bcgi will act as the System Integration Partner for the supply and management of third-party services such as content vendors and other value-added services partners.

Diemo will launch its "Diemo correspondent franchise" in small stores, gas stations and lottery agents to provide financial transactions in these areas. The company has also



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partnered with retail chains for both selling its MVNO services and serving as end distribution points for mobile-driven, real-time cash transfer offerings.

Diemo will utilize the network of Digitel, GSM operator in Venezuela, for its real-time cash transfer-focused MVNO service in the country. Further, the company plans to launch similar country-specific MVNO services across various countries in South America, starting with Colombia in late 2008.

Commenting on the deal, G.V. Kumar, Chief Executive Officer of XIUS-bcgi, said: "The contract with Diemo is a multi-million dollar, multi-year contract and delivers on our promise to provide the next generation of services-centric, core network infrastructure. Our Mobile Services Platform offers powerful services, rapid deployment and management of applications that seamlessly integrate with existing infrastructure and third-party solutions".

Swan Approaches BSNL For Offering MVNO Services – India

According to Business Standard, Swan Telecom (Swan) is in talks with Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL), the Indian state-owned mobile operator, for carrying out mobile operations in the country.

Swan obtained licenses for 13 circles in the beginning of 2008 and is looking at an MVNO-type agreement with BSNL in order to reduce start-up costs. Although BSNL did not comment on the proposal, Department of Telecommunications (DoT) confirmed an offer from Swan. Financial details of the prospective agreement have not been disclosed.

Aster Launches MVNO Service – Poland

Aster Mobile, a leading cable TV provider, has included mobile telephony in its suite of services; providing Internet, cable TV and fixed-line services. The company recently started post-paid MVNO services by utilizing the infrastructure of PTK Centertel (Orange).

Aster will initially provide mobile telephony services in Warsaw and plans to offer the same in Krakow and Zielona Gora from September 2008. To start with the company will offer eight handset models of Nokia; however, the portfolio will be widened in the future with other Nokia devices. Aster aims to sell 50,000 SIM cards by the end of 2008, with a total investment of PLN 4 million (USD 1.96 million).

Telco AG Poised To Obtain Mobile License – Bulgaria

Telco AG, a Liechtenstein-based firm with VoIP and MVNO licenses, has emerged as the sole bidder for Bulgaria's fourth mobile license after seven other potential bidders pulled out of the process owing to a very high license price set by the regulator.

According to the Chief Executive Officer of Max Telecom, one of the bidders, the regulator has employed an ambiguous pricing method and has demanded a price tag twice as high as for mobile license given to Globul and six times in case of Vivatel, the second and third mobile operators in Bulgaria, respectively.

The regulator will form an advisory committee to check if the papers submitted by Telco AG meet the tender criteria; if yes, then the company will be invited to pay the license fee.

Tesco Mobile Revamps Branding To Woo New Subscribers – UK

Tesco Mobile, which utilizes O2's network for providing MVNO services, has revamped its branding to reach out to new customers. The company has updated its portal, which attracts 300,000 users monthly and runs advertisement campaigns for brands such as ITV, Nivea and Teletext, and also has changed its logo. Moreover, the company has also simplified its tariffs by launching a single price point for prepaid subscribers.

Koodo Mobile Introduces New Plans – Canada

Within four months of its operations, Koodo Mobile, a youth-oriented MVNO owned by Telus, has modified its various plans and prices to attract more customers. The company has introduced the following new plans:

- Talk and Text Plan for USD 25 including picture and video messaging.
- Unlimited messaging including picture and video messages for USD 10 per month.
- Caller ID, Voicemail and Unlimited Messaging (with picture and video) for USD 15.
- The company also introduced a new rate plan called "Nationwide Talk and Text Plan" for USD 45, which includes free Canada-wide calls, 250 anytime minutes and unlimited messaging.

However, the prices for customers who subscribed to the plans at the start will remain the same in accordance to their contracts.

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