NEWSLETTER

Highlights and activities for Weeks 14- 17 (01.04.16 – 30.04.16)

A. International Meetings attended by MCA representatives

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A. International Meetings attended by MCA representatives

The 12th Electronic Communications Committee Working Group Numbering and Networks Meeting

An MCA representative participated in the 12th Electronic Communications Committee Working Group Numbering and Networks Meeting, which was held on the 27th and 28th April 2016 in Jūrmala, Latvia. During this meeting, various presentations were delivered to provide an overview of the work related to current and future numbering issues which were carried out during the past six months by different project teams reporting to this working group. An external session focusing on numbering for M2M/IoT was also held with presentations from various industry stakeholders.

Ovum's 5th Annual Smart to Future Cities & Urban IoT 2017

A representative of the MCA participated in the Ovum's 5th Annual Smart to Future Cities & Urban IoT 2017, which was held between the 25th and 27th April 2016 in London, UK. It focused on best practices in the development of smart cities, particularly cities leveraging on communications technologies like Internet of Things. The conference was spread over two days and had two simultaneous tracks on both days. A parallel, startup exhibition was also held but this was limited to around 8 startups.

The 1st Horizon 2020 Future Internet Forum

An MCA representative attended the 1st Horizon 2020 Future Internet Forum, which was held between the 20th and the 21st April 2016 in Brussels, Belgium. The objective of this forum was to facilitate exchange of information, sharing of good practices, facilitation of coordination, and integration of relevant activities in the area of Future Internet in the Member and Associated States.

 The forum focused:

- on research and development
- on reinforcing innovation
- on promoting take-up in the area of Future Internet

During the first meeting the domains of Communication Network Technologies (and in particular 5G); Internet of Things and Cloud-based services and infrastructures were discussed.

BeSmartOnline! – Insafe Training Meeting and Steering Committee Meeting

A representative of the MCA attended the 'BeSmartOnline! – Insafe Training Meeting and Steering Committee Meeting' hosted by the European Network for Safer Internet Centres across Europe between the 20th and 22nd April in Larnaca, Cyprus, which centred around the themes of privacy and gaming.

Connecting the Internal Market through Modern Regulation

An MCA representative together with other Government officials attended a High-level meeting 'Connecting the Internal Market through Modern Regulation'. The meeting was hosted on the 19th and 20th April 2016, by the current presidency of the Council of the E.U. for Government representatives in Amsterdam, Netherlands, to discuss the upcoming review of the Electronic Communications Framework - a set of laws establishing the rules of the sector.

BEREC General Meetings – Session 4

An MCA representative attended the BEREC General Meetings – Session 4 between the 19th and 21st April 2016 in Brussels, Belgium. Apart from an overview of Session 3 the reaming of the session dealt with Spectrum Policy, the concept of the USO, the issue of Consumer and Data Protection, Competition Policy and the Concept of Copyright.

Regulatory Meeting on Postal Statistics

An MCA representative attended the Regulatory Meeting on Postal Statistics on the 19th April 2016 in Brussels, Belgium. This is a yearly meeting in which the various NRAs together with the Commission meet to discuss the development of Postal Statistics. During the meeting the challenges in relation to parcel data were discussed due to recent developments of eCommerce.

European Consumer and Competition Day

A representative of the MCA attended the 'European Consumer and Competition Day Conference' hosted by the Netherlands presidency on the 18th of April 2016 in Amsterdam. The conference discussed the rise of online platforms and their impact on the economic and societal aspect of our lives and the challenges that these advances present from a policy perspective. It also discussed the current competition and consumer protection laws and analysed whether these are adequate to address current competition issues and protect consumers' interests.

MEA EWG Drafters Meeting

An MCA representative attended the MEA EWG Drafters Meeting which was held between the 13th and 15th April 2016 in Barcelona, Spain. The BEREC's Market and Economic Analysis Working Group (MEA EWG) was tasked to draft a follow-up document to BEREC's report on Oligopoly Analysis and Regulation, in the context of the forthcoming review of the Framework and the SMP Guidelines. This document will serve as a reference to the Commission on matters concerning the assessment and regulation of tight oligopolies. The meeting's agenda included 2 other items, the 2017 Work Program of the MEA EWG and the study on post-mergers and acquisitions earmarked for completion this year.

BEREC's Expert Working Group Meeting

A representative of the MCA participated to a BEREC's Expert Working Group meeting held in Hague on the 13th April 2016, where the Draft BEREC Guidelines on the Implementation by National Regulators of European Net Neutrality Rules were discussed in detail.

ITU-EC Regional Conference for Europe on "Broadband Services and Infrastructure Mapping"

An MCA representative attended the ITU-EC Regional Conference for Europe on "Broadband Services and Infrastructure Mapping", held in Warsaw between the 11th and 12th April 2016. The conference discussed the various considerations involved in setting up broadband and infrastructure maps, and their benefit to all stakeholders.

B. MCA Publications & Website Uploads

1. **Vacancy for Accountant**
   Published on 26th April: http://bit.ly/21S6bVu

2. **Highlights and Activities for Weeks 9 to 13**
   Published on 25th April: http://bit.ly/1UPnVjm

3. **Expression of Interest - Provision of audio visual services**
   Published on 15th April: http://bit.ly/1TPgk1K

4. **Maltese retailers can now sell their products on Amazon**
   Published on 13th April: http://bit.ly/1oWlBtn

5. **The MCA publishes new measures to be introduced with regard to access of bills for Internet TV and telephony services**
   Published on 6th April: http://bit.ly/24JQuEV

6. **Consolidated Decision on the Wholesale Access to Data and the Provision of Publicly Available Directory Information Services**
   Published on 6th April: http://bit.ly/1T39W4X

7. **Vacancy for Accounts Clerk**
   Published on 6th April: http://bit.ly/1WmRvOV

8. **Vacancy for Executive Coordinator**
   Published on 6th April: http://bit.ly/1TyWLbx

9. **Vacancy for Manager, ICT & Technologies**
   Published on 6th April: http://bit.ly/24IeHIx

10. **Cloud Computing Guidelines for SMEs and Microenterprises**
    Published on 5th April: http://bit.ly/1ZAB9zL

11. **55 Schools in Malta recognised for their work to protect students online**
    Published on 4th April: http://bit.ly/1RIsbMh

MCA Events

5th April 2016: Cloud Computing Conference for SMEs and Microenterprises

Jointly organised by the Malta Communications Authority (MCA) and the Malta Information Technology Agency (MITA) and held at the Le Meridien Hotel St. Julian's, this conference specifically targeted SMEs and microenterprises and focused on the benefits of and challenges in implementing cloud based solutions for such businesses. SME's from different industries actively participated in the discussion which was led by local and foreign experts on the subject.

During the conference, A Guide to Cloud Computing for SMEs and microenterprises' eBook was launched by the Hon Josè Herrera, Parliamentary Secretary for Competitiveness and Economic Growth. He emphasised the importance for such enterprises to use the right technology to maximise their outputs and stated that 'The right technology can lead to greater efficiency for such businesses, which can only lead to greater productivity and sustainable economic growth.'

The eBook provides a wealth of information for SMEs and microenterprises, including the benefits of cloud computing, the different solutions available on the market, how to select the right vendor to ensure their business needs are met and a step-by-step guide on how to go about introducing and implementing a cloud computing solution.

C. Media participation

MCA representatives' participation in radio and television programmes.

1. Radio

28.04.16:   'L-Informatika u s-Soċjetà' – One Radio

(Programme 2: Billing)

http://bit.ly/22Og7MF

11.04.16:   'L-Informatika u s-Soċjetà' – One Radio

(Programme 1: Introduction)

http://bit.ly/1S3GPOf

2. Television

28.04.16:   'Gadgets' – TVM

(Interview Mark Spiteri + Kristoff Zammit Ciantar – Maltese Dictionary Online)

http://bit.ly/1rHN4B8

28.04.16:   'News Feature' – ONE TV

(Maltese resellers on Amazon – Denise Borda)

http://bit.ly/1Ws1rXk

21.04.16:   'Gadgets' – TVM

(Denise Borda – Interview re: Amazon)

http://bit.ly/1qfUfiA

21.04.16:   'Dak Li Jghodd - BABIES' – ONE TV

                (Mark Spiteri - Cyberbullying)

                http://bit.ly/24RRozx

21.04.16:   'Dak Li Jghodd - TEENS' – ONE TV

                (Mark Spiteri - Cyberbullying)

                http://bit.ly/1X3STnV

18.04.16:   'Twelveto3' – TVM

                (Yanika Cassar – MCA as Regulators)

                http://bit.ly/1rHPm36

12.04.16:   'News Feature' – ONE TV

                (Mark Spiteri - Dizzjunarju Malti Onlajn)

                http://bit.ly/1T7CL3q

12.04.16:   'News Feature' – ONE TV

                (eSafety Label)

                http://bit.ly/1YnL0IW

04.04.16:   'Twelveto3' – TVM

                (Mark Spiteri – Dizzjunarju Malti Onlajn)

                http://bit.ly/24O2RN3

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D. Legal Updates

Pending lawsuits:

→ 4th April: Vodafone vs MCA – re contestation of MCA MTR decision of 2014 before the Administrative Review Tribunal. Continuation of evidence by parties. Stands adjourned to 17th May 2016 – final submissions by Vodafone

→ 4th April: Vodafone vs MCA before the Administrative Review Tribunal – appeal contesting MCA's decision relating to retail market access whether GO are no longer considered to be dominant. Case adjourned for17th May 2016 – for MCA's evidence

→ 4th April: Melita vs MCA before the Administrative Review Tribunal – appeal contesting MCA's decision relating to retail market access whether GO are no longer considered to be dominant. Case adjourned for 17th May 2016 for MCA's evidence.

→ 4th April: Melita vs MCA before the Administrative Review Tribunal – contesting MCA's directory enquiry services decision. Case stands adjourned for closure of MCA's evidence and submission of Melita's final submissions.

→ 4th April: Melita vs MCA before the Administrative Review Tribunal – re contestation of a fine imposed on Melita following Melita's alleged failure to submit statistics with regard to the hybrid category re mobile telephony. Parties concluded their evidence - stands adjourned for the 17th May for ART's decision

→ 4th April: Melita vs MCA before the Administrative Review Tribunal – Melita's contestation of MCA ruling following Melita's complaint about GO's bundling of products issued in 2010. Adjourned for the Melita's final submissions

→ 11th April: arbitration on motor vehicle accident with Elmo Insurance – next sitting scheduled for the 26th May 2016.

→ 13th April: Av. Paul Edgar Micallef noe vs Sesco Investments Ltd – adjourned to 13th July 2016 for court's decision – pending before Court of Magistrates

→ 27th April: Melita vs MCA before the Court of Appeal (Inferior) – submissions by parties adjourned for the 25th May 2016

→ 27th April: Av. Paul Edgar Micallef noe vs Melitanet – adjourned to 28th November 2016 – for court decision.

New lawsuits received during April- all of which were presented before the Administrative Review Tribunal:

➔ Vodafone vs MCA: contesting MCA's decision entitled 'Virtual unbundled Access to Fibre-to-the-home: implementing the VULA remedy' (appeal was received in March and reply filed in April)
➔ Vodafone vs MCA: contesting MCA's decision entitled - "Wholesale call origination on the public telephone network provided at a fixed location in Malta – MCA decision on market definition and the assessment of competition".
➔ Melita vs MCA: before the Administrative Review Tribunal contesting an MCA regulatory decision on Standard & itemised billing

Inter-operator disputes:

➔ Inter-operator Complaint by Melita plc vs Vodafone Malta Limited alleging breach of the MCA's Broadband Internet QoS Framework Decision – receipt of submissions and response thereto. Evaluation of submissions and documentation.
➔ Inter-operator dispute by Vodafone Malta Limited versus GO plc relating to duct sharing. Evaluation of submissions made by both parties.
➔ Inter-operator complaint by Vodafone Malta Limited versus GO plc and SmartCity in relation to access to ducts within SmartCity. Complaint has been forwarded to GO and SmartCity for their response.

Laws:

➔ Publication of Act XVIII entitled and "The Utilities and Services (Regulation of certain services) Amendment Act, 2016

E. International News

REGULATION

Engadget   *FCC expands Lifeline to help low-income Americans afford Internet*

The FCC has voted 3-2 to approve expanding its Lifeline program that has subsidised phone and prepaid wireless access for low-income Americans since the 80s, so that now it covers internet access too [read more].

NPR   *FCC votes to propose new Privacy Rules for Internet Service Providers*

The Federal Communications Commission is officially proposing to begin regulating how Internet service providers handle user privacy. The agency is looking to restrict the companies' ability to share with advertisers and other third parties the information they collect about what their customers do online [read more].

Ofcom   *Ofcom consults on designing the Broadband Universal Service obligation*

In November 2015, the UK Government set out its intention to introduce a broadband universal service obligation (USO). This would give everyone a right to a decent broadband connection on request. The Government proposed introducing this universal service obligation in recognition of the increasingly important role broadband plays in people's lives [read more].

European Council   *Data Protection reform*

The data protection reform is a legislative package proposed by the Commission in 2012 to update and modernise the rules of the 1995 data protection directive and the 2008 framework decision on data protection in judicial cooperation in criminal matters and police cooperation. Uniform and up-to-date legislation on data protection is essential to guarantee the fundamental right of individuals to have their personal data protected, to allow for the development of the digital economy and to strengthen the fight against crime and terrorism [read more].

Computer Weekly *Digital Single Market: European Commission warned not to over-regulate Online Platforms*

The UK has joined forces with 10 EU member states to warn the European Commission of the economic dangers of over-regulating the use of online platforms during the delivery of its Digital Single Market strategy [read more].

Total Telecom	*Telecom Italia bows to regulatory pressure, pulls TIM Prime*

Telecom Italia has suspended its new TIM Prime tariff plan pending the outcome of negotiations with the regulator and competition authority [read more].

TechCrunch	*FCC proposes new privacy rules for ISPs*

As widely expected, the FCC has proposed expansive new data privacy rules for broadband providers that, if adopted, could see ISPs required to gain explicit consent from users for using or sharing their data [read more].

European Commission	*ePrivacy Directive: Commission launches a Public Consultation to kick start the review*

The Commission is opening a public consultation on the rules which govern the processing of personal data and the approach towards privacy in the electronic communications sector (the ePrivacy Directive) [read more].

Bloomberg *EU speeds up Android probe, giving foes 24-hour Deadlines*

The European Union accelerated its antitrust probe into Google's Android mobile-phone operating system, seen as a sign that regulators are poised to send out a formal complaint within days [read more].

Advanced Television	*Obama weighs in for open Cable Set Tops*

The Obama administration has weighed into the debate over allowing consumers to switch cable television boxes for less expensive devices, urging the Federal Communications Commission to set an example for other parts of government to boost competition [read more].

European Commission	*Full reports on the results of the two Digital Single Market public consultations on telecoms regulation and on the future needs for Internet speed and quality*

The Commission has published full reports on the results of two DSM public consultations on the review of the telecoms regulatory framework and on the future needs for Internet speed and quality [read more].

Total Telecom	*EC takes aim at Google's OEM, operator deals*

The European Commission is examining Google's relationship with device makers and operators over concerns about competition in the apps market [read more].

Telecoms.com	*Google counters EC Android accusation by saying it benefits everyone*

The European Commission has formally accused Google of abusing its dominant position with Android, but Google doesn't see what all the fuss is about [read more].

Out-law.com   *EU national competition authorities should be given more power, say consultation results*

EU competition commissioner Margrethe Vestager told a European Parliament committee that the results of the consultation show a "very coherent wish" for national enforcement to have the power to tackle illegal conduct, MLex has reported [read more].

Telecoms.com   *Ofcom charges Vodafone for PAYG billing malpractice*

Ofcom has mobile operator Vodafone in its sights after confirming it will be charging the operator for billing malpractices [read more].

Advanced Television   *Anti-trust fines for Italian football rights deal*

The Italian Competition Authority (Autorità Garante della Concorrenza e del Mercato) has levied €66 million in fines to the Italian league (Lega Calcio) and its rights holders for fixing the sale of TV packages for Serie A [read more].

Advanced Television   *Obama 'open STB' stance criticised*

Following Present Obama's call for the FCC to open up set-top cable boxes to competition, two influential lobbying bodies have unsurprisingly queried the White House's intervention [read more].

Telecoms.com   *Europe closer to abolishing roaming fees with more price caps*

Europe has taken another step towards abolishing roaming costs for consumers by introducing more price caps on calls, SMS and data usage [read more].

Total Telecom   *Ofcom finalises new BT leased line rules*

Ofcom has issued a final statement confirming new rules designed to improve BT's performance when it comes to installing and wholesaling high-speed leased lines [read more].

The Verge *Google opposes new privacy protections for set-top boxes*

Google is a big fan of the Federal Communications Commission's plan to open up cable boxes so that any company can tap into TV streams and make a new interface for them. There's just one little thing that's bothering Google about the proposal: consumer privacy rules. It thinks the FCC is too concerned with them [read more].

SPECTRUM

Policy Tracker   *RSPG wants more Clarity on 5G Spectrum*

The Radio Spectrum Policy Group (RSPG) has asked for greater clarity from its members and from industry as to which bands are needed for 5G - in particular, whether additional spectrum will be needed for service or for capacity [read more – subscription required].

Advanced Television   *Ofcom consults on 700MHz Clearance*

In November 2014, UK communications regulator Ofcom decided that the 700MHz spectrum band – which currently houses digital terrestrial television (DTT) and wireless microphones used for programme making and special events (PMSE) – would be repurposed for mobile data services [read more].

Advanced Television   *Vatican City State seeks DTT capacity*

Italy's Ministry of Economic Development has launched a bidding process for the selection of a DTT network operator for the Vatican City State (Holy See) [read more].

Nasdaq.com   *FCC Opens 600MHz Low-Band Wireless Spectrum Auction*

As promised, U.S. telecom regulator Federal Communications Commission kicked off the 600MHz low-band airwaves auction, popularly known as Incentive Auction, on Mar 29, 2016 [read more].

Telecoms.com   *US Carriers jump on FCC's 28GHz 5G Hint*

After FCC chairman Tom Wheeler hinted at his views on the key bands for 5G, carriers in the US have been quick to submit applications for testing in the 28GHz frequency bands [read more].

Ofcom   *Ofcom proposes exemptions for White Space Devices*

Ofcom is consulting on proposals to amend the licence exemption regulations for white space devices to include additional organisations which have recently qualified to provide white space database services [read more].

Policy Tracker   *UK's Ofcom still committed to IoT in lower VHF despite critics*

In a statement, Ofcom says business radio (BR) spectrum in the lower band VHF is suitable for the IoT. The regulator has said there is a "misconception" that its existing licences in this band - which are for companies looking to use radio systems in the 26-470MHz frequency range, such as taxi firms and other transport operators - were designed for voice-only communications [read more – subscription required].

Mashable *Some people are still using 2G phones, and not for the reasons you'd expect*

These are the twilight hours of 2G. The old mobile phone network, on which many of us spent our youth in the '90s texting and playing Snake, is slowly getting phased out in Australia [read more].

eCommerce Times *FCC Labels Aim to Demystify Broadband Service Plans*

The Federal Communications Commission has announced a plan to create label disclosures that would give consumers a clear picture of the pricing, speed and bandwidth they are paying for under high-speed Internet contracts [read more].

Ars Technica *Software lockdown fears aired over new EU Radio Equipment Directive*

The European Union's imminent Radio Equipment Directive threatens "software freedom, users' rights, fair competition, innovation, environment, and volunteering—without comparable benefits for security," according to the Free Software Foundation Europe (FSFE), and 22 other digital rights organisations and companies [read more].

Ofcom *Ofcom proposes to amend the regulations for Fees for 900MHz and 1800MHz*

Ofcom is consulting on a proposal to amend the regulations setting the fees payable for the 900MHz and 1800MHz spectrum [read more].

Total Telecom *Hungary publishes 3.4GHz, 3.8GHz auction rules*

Hungary has published detailed rules about its upcoming auction of spectrum in the 3.4GHz and 3.8GHz bands, giving prospective bidders until 2 May to submit their applications [read more].

Policy Tracker *UK public sector spectrum to be shared rather than released*

Much of the public sector spectrum to be made available by the UK government in the next six years is to be shared rather than released, according to government official Nick Munn [read more – subscription required].

The Verge *How the FCC's massive airwaves auction will change America — and your phone service*

The system that underpins wireless communication in the United States is about to dramatically change. In a massive, complex undertaking that will be unfolding for years, the federal government will shuffle the airwaves that carry TV and wireless signals to consumers, making room for the next generation of service [read more].

Policy Tracker   *US eyes prizes for more efficient spectrum use*

Innovators who come up with ground-breaking technologies that boost spectrum efficiency could win part of a pot of $5 million under legislation working its way through the US Congress [read more – subscription required].

European Commission   *Commission sets out technical conditions to allocate more radio frequencies to mobile internet services*

The European Commission has adopted an Implementing Decision on the harmonisation of the 694-790MHz (700MHz) frequency band for wireless broadband [read more].

Policy Tracker   *Operators set out their agenda for European spectrum regulation review*

Mobile operators would like to see more consistency in the management of spectrum across Europe, in particular on licence duration, fees and assignment timeframes [read more – subscription required].

Policy Tracker   *UK regulator plans to use coverage obligations in 700MHz auction but further battles with mobile operators lie ahead*

UK regulator Ofcom has published its "initial conclusions" from the strategic review of digital communications it launched in 2015 [read more – subscription required].

Engadget   *FCC introduces rules to prevent 5G price hike*

The FCC is planning to regulate wholesale internet rates charged by cable companies, a move that could indirectly affect consumer wireless data prices. Such business internet services, called "special access," dictate what wireless carriers pay to supply data to cellular data networks [read more].

INTERNET

European Communications   *BT announces fibre milestone, wins Panalpina comms deal*

BT said Openreach's fibre network has passed the 25 million premises mark, as it revealed an enterprise contract win with freight forwarding and logistics company Panalpina [read more].

Telecoms.com   *UK MPs slam broadband advertising*

A group of UK MPs initially formed to attack BT's Openreach wholesale division has moved its focus to the accuracy of broadband provider speed claims [read more].

Advanced Television   *Italy: Vodafone to offer 500 Mbps*

Vodafone Italia will become the first operator in Italy to offer speeds of up to 500Mbps on fibre [read more].

Telecoms.com   *1 in 5 US consumers now use mobile instead of fixed at home*

Figures released by the US NTIA suggest mobile internet use at home doubled between 2013 and 2015, with domestic mobile connectivity gaining ground on wireline [read more].

MERGERS & ACQUISITIONS

Total Telecom   *UK Telcos Meet with EU to Discuss O2/3UK Merger*

Key players in the UK telecoms market will be attending a meeting organised by the European Commission to debate the proposed merger of O2 with 3UK, it has emerged [read more].

Total Telecom   *Ex-head of Austria Telco Watchdog sets record straight on Post-Merger Price Rises*

The former head of Austria's telecom regulator has refuted claims that the cost of mobile services has risen in the wake of 3 Austria's acquisition of Orange [read more].

Total Telecom   *Tesco confirms Interest in 3UK/O2 Merger*

Supermarket Tesco has confirmed it is interested in 3UK's proposed acquisition of rival O2, following a report that it is keen to take full control of its MVNO joint venture with the latter [read more].

Total Telecom   *CK Hutchison offers Network Capacity to Win over EC*

In a bid to win European Commission approval for its acquisition of O2 UK, 3UK parent CK Hutchison has offered to allocate as much as a third of the merged company's network capacity to a rival [read more].

Total Telecom   *Ofcom warns of Double-Digit Price Rises following O2/3UK Merger*

Ofcom has published the results of a new study on the price of mobile services that suggested the proposed merger between O2 and 3UK could bring with it hefty hikes for customers [read more].

Telecoms.com   *Vivendi Increases Telecom Italia stake to just Below Takeover Level*

An SEC filing seen by Reuters said Vivendi dropped €145 million to increase its stake in TIM from 23.8% to 24.9% [read more].

Telecoms.com   *Europe to probe Three/Wind merger amid Competition concerns*

The European Commission will probe the proposed Hutchison-VimpelCom Italian subsidiary merger of Three and Wind, citing concerns over the effect it may have on the competitive market [read more].

Post & Parcel   *Royal Mail buys Intersoft*

Royal Mail has been on the acquisition trail again – buying Intersoft Systems and Programming, a provider of delivery management software for international parcel shipments [read more].

Telecoms.com   *iPhone manufacturer Foxconn bets heavily on Displays with $3.5 billion Stake in Sharp*

Giant Taiwanese tech manufacturer, which counts the Apple iPhone among its responsibilities, has finally concluded its prolonged courtship of Japanese consumer electronics company Sharp [read more].

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Total Telecom   *3UK strikes capacity deals with Sky, Virgin*

3UK parent CK Hutchison has struck billions of pounds' worth of mobile network capacity deals with Sky and Virgin Media in a final effort to win European Commission approval for its acquisition of O2 [read more].

Total Telecom   *Orange, Bouygues Telecom deal talks fail*

Orange's hopes of acquiring Bouygues Telecom have been dashed following the failure of talks between the pair [read more].

Telecoms.com   *Verizon lining up $8bn Yahoo bid – reports*

Verizon is lining up a bid to acquire Yahoo's web business next week, according to reports. The US cellular giant is seriously considering a bid for the internet business, with Bloomberg sources suggesting a concrete offer could come next week. It had tasked the Chief Exec of AOL, which Verizon wholly acquired last year for more than $4bn, to sound out Yahoo over a possible move earlier in 2016 [read more].

Total Telecom   *UK competition watchdog says 3UK/O2 deal may cause 'long-term damage'*

The UK's Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) issued a stern warning about 3UK's proposed merger with O2 to the European Commission, claiming that the tie-up could cause long-term damage to the mobile market [read more].

Total Telecom   *Deutsche Telekom has a flutter on Sports Betting firm*

Deutsche Telekom is seeking to buy a minority stake in German sports betting company Tipico, it emerged [read more].

Total Telecom   *Hutch faces collapse of UK deal, focuses on Italy*

The European Commission is poised to block CK Hutchison's planned takeover of O2 in the UK on competition grounds, leaving the company to focus its attentions on its less contentious ongoing merger in Italy, it has emerged [read more].

Total Telecom   *Verizon leads race to land Yahoo*

Verizon currently leads the race to acquire Yahoo, after several potential bidders dropped out of the running [read more].

Total Telecom   *EU ready to block UK mobile merger*

The European Commission is reportedly on the verge of blocking CK Hutchison's plan to acquire O2 in the UK and merge it with 3UK [read more].

Total Telecom   *Charter, TWC agree merger conditions with US authorities*

The Federal Communications Commission and the Department of Justice have outlined a series of remedies that will allow Charter Communications to push ahead with its plan to merge with Time Warner Cable (TWC) and Bright House Networks while at the same time protecting competition [read more].

Telecoms.com   *Nokia makes major IoT and devices move with €170m Withings acquisition*

Having sold off much of the family silver over the past few years Nokia is buying again and signalling a strategic move towards IoT by spending €170 million on French digital heath company Withings [read more].

INNOVATION

Mashable *Old-timey Google just launched a Landline Phone service*

Google typically likes to stand on the edge of technology (think self-driving cars and multi-modal drones), but now it's looking back at the venerable landline. Google is launching Fiber Phone, a new service tied to its Fiber Internet service, which it has slowly rolled out in the US over the past few years [read more].

Mashable *New MIT Research opens door for Password-free Wi-Fi*

Wi-Fi passwords aren't only a nuisance; in many cases, they're not even enough to actually protect the network from intruders. But new research from MIT's Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory (CSAIL) might make Wi-Fi safer while at the same time eliminating the need for passwords altogether [read more].

Ars Technica   *What the heck is… Money 20/20?*

Money 20/20 is Europe's biggest conference focused around one crucial topic, the future of money [read more].

NPR   *The Newest Public Transportation in Town: Uber*

Residents in Altamonte Springs, just outside of Orlando, have a new public transportation option: Uber [read more].

Total Telecom   *3G's days are numbered once IoT takes off*

3G could be consigned to history in Europe over the next decade, as operators come to rely increasingly on evolved 4G, and even 2G networks, for voice, data, and Internet of Things (IoT) services [read more].

Telecoms.com   *Vodafone UK offers 30 day 'no strings' trial period*

UK operator Vodafone has announced a new initiative that claims to allow new and upgrading users to cancel their contracts within 30 days for any reason they want [read more].

European Commission   *European Cloud Initiative to give Europe a global lead in the data-driven economy*

The Commission has presented its blueprint for cloud-based services and world-class data infrastructure to ensure science, business and public services reap benefits of big data revolution [read more].

eCommerce Times *Google Fattens Up Entertainment Programming Search Results*

Google will begin listing live air times for TV shows in its search results, Danial Alegre, president of global partnerships announced in his keynote address at the National Association of Broadcasters trade show in Las Vegas [read more].

Ars Technica   *The Google I/O 2016 schedule is packed with virtual reality talks*

Google I/O is only a month away. Google posted a big chunk of the schedule for the event, which contains a few hints about what to expect. The main takeaway: lots and lots of virtual reality talks [read more].

European Commission   *ISA² - Interoperability Solutions for European Public Administrations: first work programme adopted*

On 19 April 2016, the College of Commissioners of the European Commission adopted the first work programme under the new ISA² programme. The €131 million programme, which runs from 2016 to 2020, supports the development of interoperability solutions for the modernisation of public administrations across Europe [read more].

Reuters   *EU lawmakers to hold off from regulating blockchain for now*

The European Union should hold off for now from regulating blockchain, the technology that underpins Bitcoin, an EU parliamentary committee agreed in the latest example of a softly-softly approach by authorities toward financial services [read more].

Reuters   *ECB experiments with technology behind Bitcoin: Mersch*

The European Central Bank is doing "experimental work" with the same ledger technology that underpins virtual currency bitcoin but it needs further research before considering adopting it, an ECB executive board member said [read more].

POST

Post & Parcel   *PRC reports "failures in overall service performance" from USPS*

The US Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC) has reported that the majority of US Postal Service (USPS) products failed to meet service performance targets for FY 2015 [read more].

Post & Parcel   *Royal Mail doubles compensation for Tracked products*

Royal Mail has announced it is increasing the compensation it offers customers using its Tracked products from £50 to £100 [read more].

Reuters   *Robots set to aid postal workers with deliveries in Germany*

Germany's Deutsche Post is testing robots that could help postal workers cope with increasing numbers of parcels on their delivery rounds, a company manager said [read more].

Post & Parcel   *"Forced" USPS price reductions come into effect on Sunday*

The US Postal Service (USPS) has issued a statement claiming it will lose about $2bn in annual revenue as a result of the "forced" price reduction that will come into effect on Sunday (10 April) [read more].

Post & Parcel   *SNCF and Le Groupe La Post announce national roll-out for parcel lockers*

French rail company SNCF and Le Groupe La Poste have announced that they are planning a national roll-out of the "Collect & Station" parcel lockers in train stations [read more].

ECOMMERCE

eCommerce News *New website Ecommerce Europe Trustmark online*

The Ecommerce Europe Association has released the new website for its Ecommerce Europe Trustmark. With the website, the pan-European online retail association wants to give consumers a place where they can read in full what their rights are and what commitments the online retailer has made [read more].

Out-Law.com *Consumer Protection Laws need to be Updated, says OECD*

People buying online should have the same protection as buyers in the physical world, the OECD Recommendation on Consumer Protection in E-Commerce said [read more].

eCommerce News *Free shipping should boost UK's cross-border sales*

Just 56% of small and medium-sized online businesses in the United Kingdom sell to customers abroad [read more].

TELEVISION

Ars Technica *Twitter buys NFL streaming rights for 10 Thursday Night Football games*

The National Football League has announced that Twitter will stream 10 Thursday Night Football games, free for all users, during the 2016 regular season [read more].

Advanced Television *IPTV overtakes pay Satellite TV in Western Europe*

The number of homes paying for IPTV in Western Europe overtook pay satellite TV ones in 2015 [read more].

The Verge *FCC chairman Tom Wheeler praises Comcast as it moves away from set-top boxes*

Speaking in a press conference, Federal Communications Commission chairman Tom Wheeler praised Comcast for its decision to partly unbundle its pay-TV service from its proprietary set-top box, according to a report from Ars Technica [read more].