

Open Mobile September Newsletter: Net Neutrality

Dear all,

Welcome to the September edition of the Open Mobile Media newsletter.

In this edition:

- * FCC backs open mobile movement
- * Does open = good? If so, how open?
- * Who pays for mobile broadband?
- * Carrier reactions to the announcement
- * Upcoming event: Open Mobile SF - already facing capacity issues

* FCC backs Open Mobile Movement

Another milestone in the open mobile revolution this week with Chairman Genachowski's announcement that the FCC is exploring new regulations to bring wireline net neutrality requirements to bear on the wireless industry.

This is a complex issue, and one that has been much debated in the past couple of days. How these principles might be applied is a complex issue. We'll be exploring all these aspects on the 'Regulation, Anti trust and Open access' panel in San Francisco on November 5, with participation from the FCC, AT&T, Virgin Mobile and regulatory and policy experts.

However the specifics work out, what this announcement makes clear is that the new FCC chairman is committed to bringing the open principles of the Internet to the mobile arena.

* Does open = good? If so, how open?

Perhaps the more interesting question in all of this is how exactl this can be accomplished. How do you bring the 'magic' of the Internet to mobile? If 'open' is the key, exactly how much open-ness is required - and how much is actually practicable?

There's a general assumption often that open = good, at least as far as the mobile Internet's concerned. But the iPhone has been great for mobile Internet, and it's rather famously a closed platform.

So, do we need to be open at the network? Have fully open web standards? And open source software? Or just be open to applications?

This is the core of the debate. We've brought Vint Cerf, godfather of the Internet itself, to address the issue at Open Mobile Summit SF 09.

Vint has some interesting perspectives on exactly how open the mobile network could be, and might ideally be, as well as how to bring the inter-connected-ness of the Internet to mobile devices. He even suggests changes that could be made to the Internet itself to make cross-network interconnectivity better. He'll also be addressing the new dimension that mobile brings to the Internet, and the emergence of the geo-web.

Incidentally, after his keynote he'll be joined by Michael Abbott SVP Palm, Lee Williams Executive Director Symbian, Kevin Lynch CTO Adobe and John Donovan CTO AT&T in the discussion 'Platforms for Innovation: Which degree of Open-ness?' which is chaired by Wall Street Journal's Walt Mossberg. Should be a very enlightening conversation.

* Who Pays for Mobile Broadband?

Obviously, the FCC's position on net neutrality in wireless also has serious implications on carrier business models, as they look to be more than 'dumb pipes' and find other models monetize mobile broadband.

As mobile broadband usage explodes, it's the flat rate, open Internet model that is driving the explosion. As we all know, the economics of this from a carrier perspective today are not particularly attractive.

I've discussed this at length in previous newsletters so I won't revisit it now. What I will say is that it's critical, if the mobile Internet is to become pervasive, that there is a compelling business model for those that license the spectrum, roll out, and maintain, the networks.

There's a panel specifically addressing 'Who pays for mobile broadband' in the upcoming San Francisco event.

<http://www.openmobilesummit.com/agenda.aspx>

You can also access podcasts on the topic from the London event this past June. Notably the keynote from Kenneth Karlberg, President of the mobile arm of Scandinavia's TeliaSonera, and the Operators and Open Access panel with Dean Bubley, Hossein Moin and others here:

<http://www.openmobilesummit.com/lon/agenda.aspx>

* Carrier reactions to the FCC announcement

Whilst no strangers to open-ness, an AT&T spokesman voiced the following concern:

"We are concerned that the FCC appears ready to extend the entire array of net neutrality requirements to what is perhaps the most competitive consumer market in America, wireless services."

Official comments from Sprint and Clearwire were more unreservedly positive:

"Sprint Nextel agrees with Chairman Genachowski that consumers are well served by an open Internet. Put simply, Sprint wants customers to be able access the applications and the Internet sites they want, when they want to."

"Clearwire applauds the chairman's efforts to safeguard an open Internet and his desire to strike a balance between consumers' need for open, rich access to the Internet and appropriate network management practices"

Meanwhile, a Verizon spokesperson asserted that Verizon 'has long championed an open Internet' before stating that regulation was not only not required, but may threaten jobs and investment:

"We believe that when the FCC reviews the record and looks at the facts, it will be clear that there is no current problem which justifies the risk of imposing a new set of regulations that will limit consumer choices and affect content providers, application developers, device manufacturers and network builders. Particularly in today's economy, America cannot afford regulations that may have the unintended consequence of stifling technological innovation, jobs and investment"

* Upcoming event: The second annual Open Mobile Summit, SF November 4-5

It's a year since our first ever event, the Open Mobile Summit San Francisco, and what a difference it is, second time around!

Last year we ultimately delivered a packed-out event, but it was a long hard marketing battle as we were brand new to the market. This year, we're already 70% full - with still 6 weeks to go - and looking now for expansion capabilities.

All very exciting. Thanks all for your support. Looking forward to meeting those of you that will be joining us in San Francisco in a few weeks time for what is going to be a landmark discussion.

* Sponsors and exhibitors at the Open Mobile Summit SF Nov 4-5

We've also expanded the event this year to include an exhibit area - with 12 companies exhibiting and demo-ing products.

A couple have selected the Open Mobile Summit as the platform for global product / initiative launches, so keep an eye on the press coverage.

Plus Google's Android team are sponsoring, and running an application developers showcase at the event.

Gold sponsors this year include: Intel, Access, Ericsson and Oracle.
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Interested in sponsoring the Open Mobile Summit London, Boston or San

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That's all for now. See you next month

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The Open Mobile Summit 09
<http://www.openmobilesummit.com/>
San Francisco, November 4-5

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