monetizing connected consumers

telemedia MAGAZINE

ISSUE 57 | £4.99

IN THIS ISSUE

TELECOMS & NETWORK PROVIDERS

Voice and IPRN traffic: how coronavirus has shifted telecoms

The coronavirus pandemic and the attendant lockdown around the world has had a profound impact on telemedia markets: content services and the billing that goes with it have rocketed, while voice traffic has gone up. International premium rate services, however, have taken a hit – but there may be better times ahead (see page 5).

CONTENT

Content services – particularly games, gambling, eSports and chat services – have all had a huge boost over the lockdown, with a study by Bango into what people in countries where Corona has surged and, hopefully, peaked shows that they are using mobile to shop for food, shop for other items, play

>> 3

IN THIS ISSUE

MEDIA & CONTENT

eSports: winning in lockdown – and scoring beyond

One of the early winners in the sudden shift in consumer behaviour worldwide has been the rise of eSports. From simple entertainment through to driving gaming and gambling, esports has become a key form of entertainment content for millions of people.

The lack of live sports is being keenly felt by many people worldwide. They rely on it for entertainment, engagement and more. And this is not going to change any time soon – in

>> 4

30 COMPANIES YOU SHOULD BE DOING BUSINESS WITH!

See page 29


DIMOCO
carrier billing
DIRECT CARRIER BILLING:
YOUR SAFE PAYMENT BET
Win underbanked customers
Strike one-click payment
Score impulse deposits
sales@dimoco.eu
dimoco.eu/carrierbilling

Content & Voice

<< 1

games and use social media.

Games and gambling as we see on pages 6 and 12 are already surging, while ecommerce is also heavily in play (see page 8).

But there have been a raft of other developments across telemedia in domestic and international voice traffic levels.

VOICE

Voice traffic on mobile and fixed line telecoms networks, which has been on the wane for at least five years, is growing. A recent study by Global Data points to how these voice calls have seen more growth in the past two months than in the same number of years.

According to the study, in both the US and Spain – countries at either end of the lockdown spectrum, Spain tight, US not so much – there has been a marked uptick in mobile voice calls.

AT&T reports that mobile voice minutes are up anywhere from 25 to 41% compared to an average – pre-COVID-19 – day, while in Spain, mobile operators banded together to ask customers to shift their calls to landlines after a 50% rise in mobile calls.

Meanwhile, UK operator O2 reported on 27 March that it had seen, since 16 March, 57% more voice calls at the busiest point of the day. Typically, it says, voice traffic increases 5% year on year, "and in a week we have experienced an increase of voice traffic comparable to nine years of regular demand," says Brendan O'Reilly, CTO, O2.

Similarly, on 24 March, Telenor in Norway tweeted: "Traffic has increased sharply since the coronavirus was seriously registered in this country. 50% increase in mobile voice, 25% increase in mobile data and 30-40% increase in fixed broadband".

Neighbouring Telia in Denmark also reported that (translated from original): "Thursday, March 12, the volume of speech in the network thus increased by 24% compared to the day before. Over the weekend 50% more was spoken - obviously due to a need to gain status on family and friends in the new situation. In the past working week, about 60% more has been spoken on the phone than on a normal week in March."

And it isn't just the quantity of voice that is going up, but also the quality time spent chatting the old-fashioned way.

GlobalData has identified that, while the number of mobile calls remains roughly constant, mobile call length has risen substantially.

This is backed up by O2. "This shift shows that as a country we are talking much more," says o2 CTO O'Reilly. "On average customers are speaking to each other for approximately 40% longer. In these worrying times, it's comforting to know that a medium that was becoming less popular with the huge proliferation of data services, is actually as important as ever."

And traffic patterns are changing as well, O'Reilly says. "Previously our voice traffic peak has been at 6pm, but over the last few days, we are seeing a shift to around 11am-12pm, possibly as children connect and learn in new ways online and people work from home during the day."

THE GLOBAL VIEW

International voice traffic has also seen a surge. Resaerch from i3forum Insights, powered by TeleGeography, showed a 20% increase in international voice traffic in March 2020, compared to the same month in 2019, while roaming traffic dropped by 30%.

The average length of calls increased by more than 30% in March and over 60% in April 2020 compared to 2019.

"Changing user behaviours, resulting from the move to remote working and 'stay at home' orders, have had an immediate impact on the international voice market," explains Philippe Millet, Chairman of i3forum.

"i3forum Insights has seen an initial spike in traffic in March then a return to regular traffic volumes in April, albeit with different patterns as people have adapted to new social and working situations," he says. "What is striking is the growth in call duration. Calls are longer and that compensated for the decline in number of calls." Millet continues: "The first half of 2020 has really shown the value that traditional voice delivers in challenging times. It remains critical for businesses and consumers."

The comprehensive market database for international voice services provides participating carriers with new visibility, insights and data from across the industry. Contributors to the database include BICS, BTS, iBasis, Orange, PCCW Global, Tata Communications, Sparkle, Telefónica International Wholesale Services, and Telstra. The database provides intelligence on more than 17,400 destinations.

"The nine carriers currently using the platform have generated more than 1,200 logins to the platform per month," adds Millet. "This demonstrates that despite the companies operating remotely, i3forum Insights is being well embedded into operational processes. Users connect frequently with an average of 10 logins per user per month, showing the platform's intensive use and support for carriers' day-to-day businesses. Users of i3forum Insights are seeing these trends and are able to use this intelligence to optimise their businesses and better serve their customers."

i3forum Insights works by carriers uploading their voice traffic data into the system and comparing data with the rest of the market. All data provided is fully anonymised and remains 100% confidential. The platform, based on i3forum requirements, was developed and is operated by TeleGeography, experts in managing large data sets in the carrier industry. Users can check new data against the latest figures from other anonymous participants and pull data to create custom reports.

eSports

<< 1

fact, as with many things in the Corona era, a sudden and immutable shift in consumer behaviour has been ushered in.

And what an opportunity it is. For starters, using sports clips to entertain is going to be a market that carrier billing is all but designed for – as we have said before – and with the lack of live content right now, turning to 'classics' like best goals and more is going to fill the gap before live sports return.

Even when sports are back on, there will still be a huge market for using sliced and diced content to drive engagement and extra revenues around existing subs services.

Virtual horse and dog racing was already becoming a key area for igaming over the past few years – up from 63% of punters in the UK in 2016 to 66% in 2018.

However, lockdown has ushered in a huge new interest in watching virtual events and betting on them – not only among the core of the igaming public, but also amongst a whole new cohort of players.

For example, in the US NASCAR drew an audience of 1.3 million to its virtual eNASCAR iRacing Pro Invitational Series, a SIM race/esports event modelled after the motorsport.

Before the Covid-19 outbreak struck, analysts expected the esports betting market to generate anything between $12 billion between $15 billion in terms of total wagers.

There would also have been half a billion esports enthusiasts, a term used by Newzoo to describe individuals who are actively participating in esports – whether as competitors, audiences, consumers or other. These numbers have now changed.

In analysing the market, EveryMatrix considers two main types of esports competitions, taking into account the growing interest in eNASCAR, NBA2K and FIFA 20. The report differentiates between simulation of rea-life sports games and classic games.

EveryMatrix has collated data from 10 bookmakers, showing that esports betting activities have grown 40-fold between 9 March and 19 April 2020. Generating an estimated 80% of the total betting volume can be attributed to FIFA and NBA2K.

As to traditional or classic games, the report notes that League of Legends (38%), CS: GO (29%) and Dota 2 (18%) accounted for 85% of the total esports betting volume in that segment.

LET'S PLAY

The other side of esports that is going to be just as important to the telemedia sector is that of live gaming and 'Let's play' content. Live games – where players play video games against each other – has been a growing sector for some time, with tournaments attracting thousands of live visitors and many millions more online.

And getting people paying to play, to watch and rewarding them for doing so is going beyond ad funding and starting to become an interesting merging of carrier billing and cryptocurrency tokenisation.

For example, attention-focused tech company Verasity has launched a new game store that rewards its users for playing games. For every minute of gaming, players will receive digital tokens that are exchangeable to Amazon vouchers and many other rewards. There are already thousands of games available from more than 550 game publishers, ensuring a wide variety of genres.

The platform is part of the Verasity.tv online portal, which also hosts a Watch&Earn program and several B2B tools. Publishers use Verasity's rewarding-technology to improve aspects such as engagement and monetization.

This sort of idea is going to rapidly gain ground and is an ideal play for telemedia companies to tap into.

Let's play – tutorials and talk-throughs of game content – meanwhile is also becoming hugely popular even without the Corona bounce. According to Juniper Research, it is set to help drive the whole eSports segment to reach 858 million unique views by 2022, up from 630 million this year.

These are big numbers and we are going to see a whole raft of innovations around esports in the coming months as those of us stuck at home for an unprecedented length of time look for new ways to be entertained.

This is a business about to really take off and we certainly think the opportunities are huge and will shortly be preparing a white paper designed to make the case for deploying far more carrier billing and mobile engagement technology across a range of key verticals – including games, gambling and sports.

international premiums

Central African Republic
+236

Guinea Bissau +245

Poland +48

Somalia +252

Comoros Islands +269

Sierra Leone +232

Tonga +676

Guinea +224

Congo +242

Guyana +592

East Timor +670

Albania +355

Burundi +257

Morocco +212

Liberia +231

Vanuatu +678

Promote our Exclusive International Premium Rate Numbers and benefit from our highest payouts, fastest payments, secured transfers and most reliable partner!

Want to know more?! www.interprems.com | info@interprems.com

THE POWER OF PAYMENT !

Games without frontiers

The rise of mobile gaming has been given a massive boost by the global lockdown – however m-gaming was already shifting. And the rise of loot boxes and other micro-billed offerings in essentially free to play games offers carrier billing a huge opportunity. Paul Skeldon reports

Mobile games have long been one of the major mobile content tropes that drive the business. In this time of lockdown, like all content, they have become not only an increased revenue driver, but also increasingly a test bed for carrier billing in the mainstream market.

In 2017 mobile games generated $44.2bn profit, revealed the Statista survey. Over the next two years, this figure jumped to $49bn globally. The statistics indicate that the entire mobile gaming market is forecast to show an annual growth rate of 2.1% in the next four years. The average revenue per user currently amounts to US$35.16, and this figure is expected to fall to $32.66 by 2024.

Analysed by geography, China is set to remain the leading mobile gaming industry in the world. The statistics show the Chinese market is expected to reach $19.9bn profit in 2020, or nearly 40% of the entire mobile gaming revenue this year.

The United States ranked as the second-largest market globally, with $10.1bn income in 2020. Japan represents the third leading mobile gaming industry, with $6.4bn in revenue this year. South Korea and the United Kingdom follow with $2.2bn and $1.4bn income, respectively.

Recent years have witnessed a massive growth in the number of mobile gamers all around the world. In 2017, 1.1bn people were playing mobile games globally. The figure continued growing by more than 100 million per year, reaching 1.3bn in 2019. More than 36% of mobile gamers in 2019 were aged between 25 and 36 years old.

The statistics indicate the number of users in the mobile games segment is expected to hit 1.4 billion this year. By 2024, more than 1.7 billion people worldwide will be playing mobile games.

LOOT BOXES AND MICROBILLING

One emerging trend in mobile games that is set to be a boon to the telemedia industry are loot boxes. Found in video games, loot boxes are in-game packs often gifted to players as a result of completing in-game tasks and achievements.

Increasingly, these are made available to purchase with real-world currency to provide a boost to in-game progression, or to enhance character abilities.

Loot boxes work on the element of 'chance' they provide a random selection of items, giving players a chance of winning a rare or highly sought-after good.

However, most games do not report odds and often will provide the best items and goods via paid loot boxes.

In many instances this has been described as a 'pay to win' system. These products have their origins in MMOs (Massively Multiplayer Online) or MMORPG (Massively Multiplayer Online Role Playing games) titles, where players would group together to complete particularly difficult boss battles or raids.

Their reward was then presented as 'loot', a collection of items, often rare or highly sought-after by other players and, in many cases, these could be traded or sold for in-game currency.

According to Juniper Research, the use of loot boxes has extended to top notch 'AAA games', where micro-transactions are now commonplace in popular game titles.

AAA video games are the equivalent of movie blockbusters; games are often years in development, expensive to produce and promote and offer rich worlds and environments. Their target is to be among the highest selling and thus most profitable games produced by studios.

However, these titles are expensive to produce and involve huge teams to pull the game together. As new technologies and standards come into play, costs are ever-growing – similar to the situation in the movie industry – yet game prices are relatively flat, leading to developers seeking new means to monetise their products.

This has seen games evolve from paid for DLC (Downloadable Content), where expansions, to a base game are made available to purchase. There has also been a shift to 'season passes', where all DLC is bundled and made available as it is released, often combined with special edition cosmetic items or weapons.

Special and limited editions of games that are higher priced than base versions, but include DLC or special in-game features/items, are also on the rise, as too are in-game micro-transactions, for loot boxes, where users pay for either cosmetic items, or packs which could offer rare or legendary items to help progression.

"We believe that the use of micro-transactions and in-game loot boxes will continue and, whilst some restrictions may be put in place by government and regulatory bodies, the practice is unlikely to be banned out-right simply due to the effect it would have on the games industry as a whole," explains Lauren Foye, games analyst at Juniper Research.

"We do believe, however, that following the controversy surrounding Battlefront II, players will be more critical of micro-transactions and some titles could underperform in terms of sales as a result," adds Foye. "Additionally, more developers will scrutinise their approach to the introduction of such monetisation; likely dropping prices and increasing odds of winning rarer items."

However, this rise of micro-billed loot boxes has further potential. While Juniper sees Free to Play (F2P) games experiencing substantial uptake on mobile devices, their prevalence can also be credited with reviving the PC games market. "We feels that their use in this segment will continue to grow, especially when we recognise the success that loot boxes and skins have had in both monetising users and keeping them engaged with titles long term," says Foye.

"Given the fact that console games have not had substantial disruption from loot boxes as yet, Juniper feels that this industry is ripe for disruption, should regulators not seek to impose restrictions on the practice," Foye adds.

However, there is a note of caution. Due to the fact that most console titles remain at a high price point, Juniper expects gamers will be reluctant to pay for full-titles (often priced in excess of $50) and then be expected to purchase in-game items and add-ons.

"As a result we believe there will be an up-tick in F2P games, with these titles then monetised through in-game purchases utilising loot box mechanics," says Foye.

And all this is an opportunity for carrier billing. Micro-billing 'in the moment' is going to be key to making loot boxes work – not just on mobile but on desktop too – and once again we can see that there is plenty to play for for carrier billing providers in the new world of mobile games post-CV19.

The shift in shopping

With people stuck at home and the shops shut, there has been a not wholly unexpected rise in e- and m-commerce worldwide thanks to COVID-19. **Paul Skeldon** takes a look at how shopping has changed, what it means for telemedia and why things will never be the same again

Affiliate marketing gets an ecommerce boost

One of the biggest winners from the coronavirus switch to ecommerce is going to be affiliate marketing. Anyone who thought that it was on the wane needs to think again. It is back with a vengeance.

2020 will be the year that brands expand their affiliate programmes beyond mature markets like the UK and US and complement their programmes with affiliates in emerging markets, according to CJ Affiliate.

Mexico, Malaysia and the Philippines are three of the top five biggest risers for e-commerce spend in 2019, with the other two spots filled by India and China.

"Most retailers will be aware of the substantial opportunities to be had in mature markets. Dig a little deeper, though, and you'll find so many hidden gems that are now generating billions in online revenue and many brands are missing out by neglecting them," explains Jules Bazley, Regional Vice President, Europe at affiliate marketing network CJ Affiliate.

"Expanding affiliate programmes in markets such as these could have been a risk ten, or even five, years ago, but ecommerce growth of over 30% compared with the year before, have made them the logical next step for marketers."

According to an Accenture and AliResearch report, it's expected that more than 900 million consumers will shop internationally by the start of 2020, importing $994 million worth of products and services – three times as much as 2015. Increasing access to the internet and accessibility of mobile are major drivers behind the growth in e-commerce spend, connecting those who can't afford a desktop or tablet, as well as growing numbers of new sellers and secondary industries, adding to market momentum.

"As a result of more consumers being able to shop abroad, and the ability and willingness of businesses to expand abroad, we've witnessed huge demand among advertisers for local market experts, offering the capabilities to recruit publishers in emerging territories and supply granular insight into the potential of each region," says Bazley.

Retailers can launch in a market with little more than a single member of staff on the ground, supported by dedicated companies that have been set up to help them launch in some of the more challenging markets.

"Challenges do remain. Logistics remains one of the biggest barriers to cross-border selling, but it's not the same problem it once was," explains Bazley. "Part of the improvement has been linked to increased urbanisation within highly populated areas of Asia and Africa, which has opened more customers up to home delivery."

Online and mobile commerce has long been growing – often at the expense of real-world retail – but the lockdown across the world has seen it surge in ways previously not thought possible.

According to a pan-European survey of 1000 consumers by Astound Commerce, online shopping has seen a 129% increase in April with online sales up by 35% in the UK alone in the third week of the month.

Now some 60% of European consumers regularly shop online, according to another study by Eurostat, with Denmark having the highest proportion of citizens shopping online at 84%, followed by Sweden at 82% and the Netherlands at 81%.

Italy only had 38% of citizens shopping online, while Portugal, Greece and Cyprus only had 39%.

The countries with the smallest proportion of online shoppers were Bulgaria and Romania, with 22% and 23% respectively.

The UK, which nominally left the EU in January 2020, would have had the highest figure at 87%.

STICKING TO IT

What is perhaps most significant of all the research carried out in recent weeks into shopper behaviour is that many say that not only have they been forced to switch to e- and m-commerce, but that they like it and that they will stick with it, when things return to something approaching normality.

In early April, global commerce services company PFS looked at the changes in consumer online purchasing behaviour, as well as shopper perceptions and expectations of brands around the pandemic. It found that three in five (60%) consumers have purchased more goods since the lockdown began, than they did before, with 53% having shopped more online.

More than three quarters of these went on to say that they expect they will continue to purchase online more once the lockdown is over - indicating a potentially irreversible change in consumer purchasing behaviour.

Almost 40% of them also claimed that they had been buying goods online that they had not considered before, such as pet food and shoes, which increased to 61% for Generation Z and more than half (52%) of Millennials – good news for online retailers.

PAYING FOR IT

While the lockdown is driving a spike in ecommerce, it is merely accelerating a process that was already well underway worldwide. A report from Juniper Research finds that total eRetail transaction values could hit $4.8 trillion by 2024, up from $3.3 trillion in 2020, with growth being driven by emerging markets – typically China, which is set to see 62% value growth over the next four years.

The research identifies the Chinese eRetail market as a major factor, as well as regions such as Latin America and Africa and the Middle East, as improvements in connectivity will enable the rise of eRetail in new markets.

But what is holding it back is payments. Juniper urges payment providers to seek new revenue streams in emerging markets to mitigate slow growth in developed markets. Accelerating financial inclusion via MFS (Mobile Financial Services), QR code payments and carrier billing will be crucial for this.

The research found that mobile payments not requiring a linked bank account offer significant possibilities for eCommerce payments in developing markets.

The research also found that mobile handset penetration is rising faster than banking penetration in developing markets, meaning that mobile access is the best way for eRetail and payments providers to reach potential users.

While carrier billing may not exactly fit the bill in e- and m-commerce, the rise of alternative payments often powered by telemedia innovation, will.

With more people wanting to shop online – and many of them unbanked – the time is now for payments to shift from a raft of excellent ideas to some practical application.

As we shall see on the next couple of pages, there has been an accompanying boom in alternative payment tools during the virus crisis – and tapping into that is going to offer telemedia players and carriers some excellent new opportunities going forward.

Making variety the spice of payments

The boom in mobile content, commerce and services that is gripping the world means that there has been renewed interest in payments tech. With a vast variety of payment tools available, consumers are using many – and that has big consequences for how you let them pay. **Paul Skeldon** reports

There are many ways to pay these days – cards, wallets, bitcoin, even good old-fashioned cash – and the rise in consumption of digital content, ecommerce and services caused by the lockdown, has seen the need for remote digital payments rocket.

The interesting thing, however, is that no one method of payment has shone through as the winner: each has its own merits and, increasingly, consumers are looking to use the one that suits them most at that particular point as the way to pay.

And getting it wrong is now seen as a brand killer. Some 44% of UK consumers say that they would stop a purchase of anything online or on mobile if their favourite payment method wasn't available.

When asked in a survey by PPRO about speed and convenience, 51% of Generation Z respondents agreed that they would avoid using retailers that require entering payment credentials every time.

Older generations show a higher tolerance, with only 30% of Baby Boomers (born 1946-1964) and 25% of the Silent Generation (born before 1946) expressing a preference to use merchants that offer one-click payments.

Almost two thirds of UK shoppers (58%) would stop a purchase if the checkout process is complicated – with millennials even less tolerant of complicated checkout processes, with 67% agreeing they would be quick to abandon their purchases.

While convenience is clearly essential to consumers, retailers also need to accommodate the growing consumer awareness of information security. In fact, 59% of shoppers view the security of their data and money as most important when choosing a payment method.

On the topic of trust, 30% of UK consumers admitted that they rarely adopt new payment methods and prefer to stay with the payment methods they know. This reveals a considerable amount of UK consumers aren't prepared to veer away from their preferred payment methods when shopping online.

Merchants need to realise the importance of allowing their customers to make a purchase with their preferred payment methods. Or they run the risk of not only missing out on that single transaction but also losing a potentially loyal customer.

"With more than 450 significant local payment methods in use across the globe, it can be a challenge for retailers to understand which ones to offer their customers," says James Booth, VP Head of Partnerships, EMEA at PPRO. "However, this research shows how crucial it is to offer the payment methods the customer prefers. It proves that the payment methods you offer can make a break or a sale. Currently, 91% of UK consumers have used debit and credit cards for online purchases. 89% also confidently use PayPal or have used it in the past. 31% are confident in using mobile wallets, such as Apple Pay and Google Pay, and the use of bank transfers has doubled in the last 3 years. There's a surprising range merchants must consider at the payment page to improve conversion rates,"

He concludes: "Merchants and retailers need to be aware that a slick user experience must extend to the point of purchase. A shop may have a personalised and easy-to-navigate website, but a shopper who isn't satisfied with the payment methods available at the final stage will quickly move on to a competitor."

John Wick is Senior Vice President and General Manager, Global Product

European mobile wallets market to be worth $111.4bn by 2023

The global shift towards a cashless society and the burgeoning wealth of ways to pay has produced a massive space for mobile wallets as a new, safer and more convenient way of making payments. And with the coronavirus pandemic, electronic payments have become even more appealing as people started questioning the safety of using banknotes for fear of transmitting the virus.

According to data gathered by Finanso.se, the European mobile wallet market is set to reach $48.1bn transaction value this year, growing by 37.3% year-on-year. The strong upward trend is expected to continue in the following years, with the market reaching $111.4bn value by 2023.

Mobile wallets eliminated the need for carrying money while reducing the chances of theft or losing currency. These conveniences had been driving the impressive growth of the European market, in both business and consumer segment.

In 2017, the European mobile wallets market was worth $17.4bn, revealed the Statista survey. Over the next twelve months, the transaction value increased by nearly 45% and reached $25bn. The strong rising trend continued in 2019, with the value jumping to over $35bn. Statistics show transaction value in the European mobile wallets market increased by 175% in the last three years.

Recent years have also witnessed a surge in the number of mobile wallet users across Europe. In 2017, nearly 34.5 million Europeans had been using this contactless payment method. This number grew by more than 50% in the last three years, reaching 51.7 million in 2020. Statistics show the upward trend is set to continue in the following years, with the number of users jumping over 63 million by 2023.

The average transaction value per user in the European mobile wallets market amounts to $931 in 2020. By the end of 2023, this amount is expected to increase by 90% and reach $1,768.

Analysed by geography, the United Kingdom represents the leading European mobile wallet market expected to reach $14.9bn transaction value in 2020.

With over $4bn worth mobile wallet transactions this year, Russia ranked as the second-largest market in Europe. Spain, Sweden, and France follow with $2.6bn, $2.5bn and $2.3bn worth transactions, respectively.

Gambling: betting on a better way to spend lockdown

Want to bet when lockdown will be over? Or when we will have a COVID-19 vaccine? Well, many people are – and betting on much more besides – as lockdown ushers in a new era of iGaming. **Paul Skeldon** reports

With more people than ever stuck in doors – not just in rainy old Britain, but worldwide – online and mobile gambling is booming.

With consumers looking for something to fill the hours indoors, many have turned to online gambling and mobile gambling to alleviate the boredom.

Playing simple casino games is the obvious face of mobile gambling in lockdown, however, there is more to it than that.

Sports betting is already starting to gain traction as the rise of eSports sees more sporting content appear online filling the gap left by live sports. This combination of esports content and the lack of live sporting events has been no impediment to its up-take, with bookmakers taking odds on everything you can think of from Coronavirus lockdown outcomes to bets on esports game play.

Meanwhile, many games feature 'loot boxes' that people pay to play with in-game and these too are adding a new dimension to how people gamble.

Lotteries, too, are gaining a lot of attention, with many people playing in the hope that they will win big and be able to, one day, move into a big house – perhaps ready to sit out the next pandemic in relative luxury.

All in all, gambling services have boomed, like all content, over the lockdown. Which has come as good news for the sector. Pre-pandemic, data gathered and calculated by GoldenCasinoNews.com indicated that the UK gambling and betting revenues will drop by 17% in 2024. The data projects that the revenue will keep declining in the coming years to record $70.5 billion in four years.

This has all but been reversed – for now at least – thanks to the changing consumer habits in the pandemic.

However, there is another problem with the boom in new players wanting to gamble: how do they pay for their play?

PAY TO PLAY

With many gambling opportunities being spur-of-moment, the need for quick and easy ways to pay, add credit and even to get paid is now more important than ever.

According to research into the payment habits of different generations of players in the online gaming and betting space by PXP Financial, the global expert in acquiring and payment processing services, when it comes to online gambling, Millennials (born 1981 – 1995) are the biggest spenders and prefer to use debit payments. In contrast, Generation X (1965 – 1980) prefers to play with credit instead.

January's announcement of a credit card ban across the industry produced interesting results. Unsurprisingly, Generation X had an incredibly negative response. However, perhaps more surprisingly, each of the generations had a majority negative view on the regulation, leading to more than 50% of the respondents citing it to be harmful to the sector.

With regards to Generation Z, they have yet to have a significant impact on the online payments industry, primarily due to their age and financial capability. However, this is set to change as the group matures.

And as for the perception of retail, Millennial's were found to lean more positively towards physical shopping, although it was nearly an even split. Generation X, on the other hand, vastly preferred the convenience of shopping online.

Interestingly, the survey found that the majority of respondents preferred shopping instore to online and preferred to spend using digital currencies instead of cash. It aimed to provide another look into this generation and the spending habits of other generations in the retail sector.

THE DCB ALTERNATIVE

So, what do they want instead? One obvious choice has to be direct carrier billing (DCB). While some in the mobile gambling space use it, it is far from ubiquitous – and that is a mistake. Some 40% of people who would deposit money with gambling operators if it was easy to do so would. That means that if you were running a football team, 5 of your first team 11 wouldn't be playing.

This has become a crucial thing for gambling operators – and everyone else in ecommerce, for that matter – with choice of payments types being a decisive factor in consumers choosing to pay/play with you.

A study by PPRO reveals that 44% of UK consumers say that they would stop a purchase if their favourite payment method wasn't available.

When asked in a survey by PPRO about speed and convenience, 51% of Generation Z respondents agreed that they would avoid using retailers that require entering payment credentials every time.

The need to offer the kinds of payment methods that consumers want to use is crucial to mobile gambling, gaming and all content services.

With more people turning to their devices for entertainment the global telemedia industry is at a turning point: get it right and the shift to online and mobile as a paid for entertainment channel will stick. Get it wrong – or make it hard to pay – and the opportunity may slip through people's fingers.

Carrier billing is one of the easiest and most secure ways to pay for a short, sharp hit on any mobile content or gaming site.

If we can use the time we have now, during lockdown, to familiarise users with its ease and simplicity (as well as getting round its tarnished image of old) then it too can be a key way to pay to play for gamblers and everyone else.

Unlike other mobile payment mechanisms, DCB is essentially a revenue-share-based payment tool, with the merchant – in this case gambling operators – payment providers and mobile network operators sharing the money taken from each transaction.

This fee, worked out on a case-by-case basis, is usually slightly higher per transaction than found with credit and debit card processing, however, it isn't as expensive as it seems.

The ease-of-use for consumers coupled with its immense reach – basically tapping into anyone who has a mobile phone number anywhere in the world – makes it a truly compelling payment tool.

While the fees for using it are slightly higher, the increase in transactions that it can bring about heavily outweighs the costs.

In fact, it is becoming increasingly popular across Europe for all ecommerce transactions and a study by Juniper Research14 also found that DCB scores convert 70% for first transactions, compared with credit cards struggling at 10 to 12%.

As a result, of its growing popularity, the costs are also starting to come down too.

IPRN: weathering the storm

International premium rate (IPRN)traffic has had its ups and downs – and coronavirus has hit it hard. However, things are picking up, thanks to new ways people are using their mobiles in lockdown. **Paul Skeldon** reports

International PRS traffic was growing well before the lockdown, but has had some setbacks in some markets as the pandemic has spread.

Call centre-based operations that sit behind PRS-based helplines have had some struggles, with staff unable to come to work, especially in Tunisia, Algeria and India where lockdowns have been tightly policed by the military.

Similarly, many airlines use IPRN for its customer service and booking lines worldwide, and this of course has taken a massive hit.

However, as with voice traffic, in some regions – notably Asia – IPRN volumes are going up as more people tap into using it to pay for chatting services and for educational services.

"But higher volumes doesn't mean higher revenues," warns Josef Bruckschlögl, CEO of Kwak Telecom. "Many operators see a scissor effect, traffic up, revenue down. But some holistic industry trends may help. International payments for apps and services are likely to recover, especially in developing markets where they have no other way to pay for these things."

However, Bruckschlögl concedes that right now no one knows what the impact of coronavirus may have longer term on the market.

"In Nigeria they have a saying: 'lockdown or starve' – so they are looking at how to carry on and see what happens. Whether there is a heavy economic fall-out depends on how long this crisis lasts," he says.

The other fall-out form the corona crisis on IPRN will be how the industry will consolidate and what new entrants – with new ideas – will enter.

"[We] are already seeing Chapter 11s, bankruptcies and other problems across the entire value chain – that will inevitably lead to consolidation across the industry."

Bruckschlögl believes that the pandemic and its consequences will separate out the good from the bad and ween out many players. He also sees it as an opportunity for those left and new entrants to shake up the market and come up with some interesting new ideas.

"it will drive a clean-up throughout the industry and it will be interesting to see who comes out the other end. I am optimistic that it will ultimately be better."

Trends in IPRN

While the IPRN industry is tactically dealing with the coronavirus pandemic and its fall-out, it is also time to look more strategically at how IPRN will evolve and develop post-COVID.

So what are some of the trends?

• Social media – Payments in social media in developing markets are set to be a big growth area for IPRN. Facebook is a huge platform for content and, off the back of it, commerce in developing markets and IPRN offers many of the unbanked a way to pay for things in social media.

• In-app purchases – In the developed world, the in-app purchase market is driven by cards and ewallets, but again in the developing world, most people are unbanked and for those that have bank accounts and credit cards, the infrastructure in the banking sector isn't up to the task. Here IPRN comes into its own and is already becoming a very popular way to pay in sub-Saharan Africa, says Josef Bruckschlögl, CEO of Kwak Telecom.

• Consolidation – Perhaps the biggest trend in IPRN worldwide is that of consolidation across the industry. With the pressures of the pandemic taking their toll, many players are likely to disappear from the market. However, they are likely to be bought up and integrated into other players. It is likely that we will see some 'super-IPRN' players operating in the years ahead. It is also likely that many new entrants and start-ups will enter the market – typically in developing markets – to capitalise on how IPRN can be used as a content and services payment tool.

telemedia

THE BIG GUY Paul Skeldon
paul@telemedia-news.com

ART DIRECTOR Victoria Wren
victoria@wr3n.com

CONTRIBUTORS & CONSULTANTS
Nick Lane
John Strand
Jarvis Todd,
Tim Gree

SALES & MARKETING
info@Telemedia-news.com

PRODUCTION DIRECTOR Annika Micheli
annika@Telemedia-news.com

PUBLISHER Jarvis Todd
jarvis@Telemedia-news.com

TO SUBSCRIBE www.TelemediaOnline.co.uk

CIRCULATION ENQUIRIES
Geraldine Lawton - O'Sullivan
Geraldine@Telemedia-news.com

WHAT WE'VE BEEN LISTENING TO
Rocky Mountain High, John Denver
Screw You, Viki Vortex and the Cumshots

WHAT WE HAVE BEEN READING
The Testaments, Margaret Attwood

WHAT WE HAVE BEEN AMUSED BY
Dinner Ladies

WHO WE'VE BEEN FOLLOWING
The Red Hand Files, Nick Cave

SUMMER 2020 WILL BRING...
A very different world with face masks

TELEMEDIA MAGAZINE is published five times a year and circulated in print to qualified readers and downloaded in digital format to 12,000+ requested readers. **BUSINESS ADDRESS:** Ground Floor, Virginia Cottage, Nash Lane, Scaynes Hill, West Sussex, RH17 7NJ, UK. Web: www.TelemediaOnline.co.uk
Overseas subscriptions and non qualified readers can obtain Telemedia Magazine with an annual subscription rate of £15 / E20. Refunds on cancelled subscriptions will be provided at the publisher's discretion, unless specifically guaranteed within the term of subscription.

FROM THE EDITOR

How lockdown, carrier billing and telemedia have changed the world

What a strange world we find ourselves in since we put out the last issue of Telemedia magazine. Coronavirus has swept across the globe and, well, changed everything.

While the death toll has been appalling, the lockdown that has kept many of us safe these past months has proved to be a boon for the telemedia sector's key verticals.

Stuck at home, alone, consumers have turned to mobile and online to consume content, play games, shop and message each other. As a result, there has been a marked uptick in content traffic, content transactions, gambling, chat and more. It has also led to an unprecedented rise in voice traffic, both domestically and internationally, and has proved a timely fillip for International Premium Rate Services (IPRN).

But where the biggest impact has been felt – and where the most likely long-term impact is set to be – is with carrier billing.

With literally millions of people turning to mobile to game, gamble, chat, data, subscribe and stream, there has been a huge demand for some sort of global mobile payment mechanism. And DCB is looking like a real contender, thanks to its ubiquity.

Think about it: in Africa, mobile services have blossomed thanks to MPESA, which is essentially a pan-African payment mechanism, understood by all. In Europe there is no such single, well-known payment tool.

With millions now playing on their mobiles, the need to offer a universally recognised payment tool has become glaringly apparent.

And it isn't going to be limited to lockdown. People online and on mobile now are likely to stick with it. People enjoying the instant gratification of DCB are likely to stick with it too.

The fact that it can also work with OTT messaging such as WhatsApp and, when it comes into play, RCS, is only going to make it more attractive.

As we have seen in this lockdown-produced issue of Telemedia magazine, telemedia's time is now – and DCB is leading that charge.

www.telemediaonline.co.uk
@telemediaTweets

Paul Skeldon, editor

Business Messaging: Are you ready for the huge market rearrangement?

Messaging has changed and is set to be one of the biggest traffic sources for telcos worldwide. But what how has it changed and where is it heading? **Andreas S. Constantinides** takes a look and outlines where the opportunities shaping a new, promising messaging furure

The Telco industry is like New York – it never sleeps. Whatever new happens in technology, Telcos, most of the time, get the most out of it.

Voice, premium, payments, SMS, OTT, 'white routes' – messages that originate and terminate legally – 'grey routes' – SMS between two parties or countries which is legal for one party at one end but is illegal for the other party at the other end – any other kind routes; everything new constitutes a massive opportunity for telco players.

The competition among the popular telecommunication products and services is ruthless and, with the margins on voice now lower than ever, the moment for telcos to explore new potential opportunities with higher profit and promising future is now.

And the next segment seems to attract their attention is "Business Messaging".

The whole messaging revolution started some three years ago and is set to be the next big thing for telcos. The rearrangements made by RCS and OTT players looks like the most excellent opportunity for Telcos to keep the business running on higher revenues.

Nowadays, voice players perform business plans for messaging, examine alternatives to enrich their business and take the advantage to get aware of all "nasty" details concerning SMS, RCS, the new aspiring OTT players and the whole forthcoming messaging evolution.

But what happens with all those players: is the market already too segmented? What will be the future of SMS after this massive OTT invasion and is there a significant space for new messaging players?

A glance is enough to notice that messaging growth is more evident than ever. No matter the rumors for the struggle of SMS with the RCS and the OTT players in the last three years, all researches for the decade 2020-2030 proves that SMS will remain the King of A2P messaging.

To cut a long story short, the messaging market doesn't seem to be shrink, or divide among those players. All researches prove that the new players will contribute to increasing business messaging and market volumes. On top of the one-way A2P messaging, the P2A messaging is added.

And by 2024, this new P2A trend will launch the 2way business communication to trillion of new messages.

THE MESSAGING EVOLUTION

The messaging industry – taking both SMS and predicted RCS traffic into account – is predicted to grow from 1.55 trillion messages of A2P traffic in 2018 and to surpass the 2 trillion mark by 2023.

For the period 2018 – 2023, these two media indicate a total growth of SMS/RCS of 26.59%, with an average increase of 5,32% per year. For the current period 2020 – 2023, the traffic is estimated to be even higher, with an average growth of 5,73% per year.

SMS White traffic – White traffic is communications that originate and terminate legally and are the primary source of revenue for MNOs providing A2P SMS services. The costs for completely legal, white routing, operations are higher and, when companies use grey routes for communications, it bleeds revenue from these approved providers.

SMS white traffic is set to peak in 2021 with 1.15 trillion messages. The total growth for the period 2018-2023 is estimated to 7.20%, with average growth 1.44% per year.

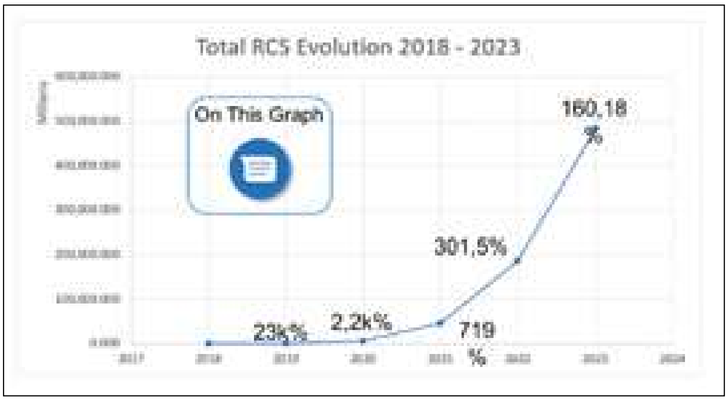
In the prediction, this peak of 2021 is falling with average growth for the current period 2020-2023 estimated to 0.22%.

SMS Grey traffic – SMS grey traffic is between two parties or countries which is legal for one party at one end but is illegal for the other party at the other end. It is basically a way of sending SMS where two operators or entities do not have a commercial relationship or agreement.

The SMS grey traffic for the period 2018-2023 is estimated to fall by 15.80% with an average loss of -3.16% per year. The fall of the grey SMS traffic will be increased for the current period 2020-2023, with an average loss of -3.79% per year.

SMS Traffic in Total (white & grey) – In the prediction, this peak of SMS traffic in total is noted in 2021, with 1.68 billion SMS. Due to the fall of the grey traffic, the SMS traffic for the period 2018-2023 estimated to fall by -1.29%, with an average loss of -0.26% per year.

For the current period 2020-2023, the fall of the SMS traffic will be increased with an average loss of -1.23% per year.



RCS EVOLUTION

Google's Holy Grail, RCS, seems to be moving with low volumes, but with significant development for the next three years.

SMS moves to RCS 2018-2023 – The SMS traffic that moves to RCS from 2018 to 2023 estimated to 480 million messages. However, the period of 2018-2019 indicates a significant low RCS traffic. The average growth for the current period 2020 – 2023 estimated to 734,63% per year.

Additional RCS traffic evolution 2018-2023 – The additional RCS traffic for the period of 2018-2023 estimated to 240 million messages. The average growth for the period 2020-2023 estimated to 2114.34% per year.

Total RCS evolution 2018-2023 – RCS seems to be started and moving with low rates for 2018-2020. However, the total RCS traffic for the period of 2018-2023 estimated to 721 million messages. The average growth for the period 2020-2023 estimated to 856.91% per year.

OTT EVOLUTION

The data provided for messaging traffic from Viber and WhatsApp is weak. Viber usually does not provide traffic information in general; however, Viber's executives had the courtesy to give a few statistics about the channel.

On the other hand, WhatsApp development, according to Mobilesquared, presenting a magnificent API development with 55k brands involved by 2024, almost ten times more than Viber.

WHAT ABOUT WHATSAPP?

WhatsApp is trying to transform its API to the most popular P2A messaging channel, and considering the number of its users, it will succeed it. While SMS remains the King of Messaging, WhatsApp seems to be the Queen of P2A.

WhatsApp Worldwide Users Evolution
2018 – 1.71 billion users
2019 – 1.96 billion users
2020 – 2.2 billion users (45.5% of smartphone users)
2024 – 3.1 billion users (59.7% of smartphone users)

How to get ahead in messaging

If you are interested as a telco in exploiting the new paradigms in messaging, but you are not sure how to do that, here are some quick, valuable tips:

- Deal with reliable Messaging Experts.
- Evaluate your Current Market Position.
- Advice researches concerning the countries of your interest.
- Explore Enterprise Messaging Market & Omni-Channel Solutions
- Evaluate the cost of creating your team and the cost of assigning the management of the required operations to third parties.
- Ensure your Investment with the proper Interconnections and reliable Partnerships.

Even if we exclude the significant presence and development of Viber and WhatsApp, the landscape of SMS & RCS messaging, as is proven by numbers, seems more promised than ever. The global revenues prediction for A2P SMS & RCS messaging is estimated from $32.3 billion in 2019 to $50.3 billion to 2023, with significant growth for this period, more than 55%.

For the first time in the history of business messaging, wholesalers are flirting with enterprise messaging seriously

WhatsApp Business API Evolution (For Medium & Large Enterprises)
2019 - WhatsApp Business API - 992 (less than a thousand)
2024 - WhatsApp Business API – 55.000

Market WhatsApp Total Spend (USD)
2019 – $38.7 million
2024 – $3.6 billion

Market Spend Breakdown
Asia – 30%
Europe (West-East) – 25%
America (North-Latin) – 24%
Rest Markets – 21%

VIBER EVOLUTION

According to Viber, the channel holds more than 4,000 registered sender IDs globally.

Viber top 10 markets are Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia, Croatia, Hungary, Philippines, Iraq.

Since Viber Business Messages in 2016 lunched, the average growth of registered brands (Sender IDs) is 30% yearly.

THE CLOCK IS TICKING

Regardless of the delays, the technicalities, and the vague trade policies of those new media, the new business messaging opportunities are just around the corner.

For the first time in the history of business messaging, wholesalers are flirting with enterprise messaging seriously. Aggregators are dealing with CPaaS and OMNI-Channel Messaging platforms, specially made for marketers and brands. Voice executives are trying to understand the messaging market to have the chance to be part of it.

The proper time for the "new" messaging players to enter the game is now.

Andreas S. Constantinides, Messaging Expert and Senior Messaging Consulting at Global Telco Consult
LinkedIn: https://www.linkedin.com/in/asconstantinides/

Has WhatsApp doomed RCS?

As growing numbers of people – including national governments – have turned to WhatsApp to communicate, has the Facebook-owned messaging app doomed RCS to being just another messaging platform? **Paul Skeldon** takes a look at how WhatsApp is on the rise, while RCS is still dogged by pricing issues and a lack of clarity

In this time of global lockdown, most of us have become over-familiar with WhatsApp – first as a way of sharing memes about lockdown when it was still a novelty and now as a vital link to friends, family and work colleagues.

But you may also have seen how more brands and businesses are attempting to get you to engage with them – and indeed are trying to engage with you – using it. This isn't a coronavirus phenomenon, this is something that has been on the rise since way before we were ravaged by a pandemic.

Brands have closely watched how the man in the street (or currently, the man in his living room) has embraced WhatsApp and its deep functionality.

The interactivity, the multimedia, the ease of use and above all the fact that it works on all smartphones, some tablets and even desktops is proving very attractive to users and businesses alike.

In fact, research by Mobilesquared suggests that, with 2 billion WhatsApp users worldwide, WhatsApp business – the business version of the messaging service that can bring all manner of interactive benefits to brands – is already the most popular business messaging service out there.

Mobilesquared's latest Databook and Report – the snappily titled "WhatsApp Business Messaging Traffic & Spend Forecasts, by country & region (2019-24)" – estimates that WhatsApp Business will experience unprecedented growth of more than 5,400% among medium and large businesses looking to use it to interact with consumers – up from just 992 at the end of 2019 to almost 55,000 by 2024.

In total, the company predicts that brands and businesses will spend $3.6 billion by 2024 on WhatsApp Business. Much of this will be 'inbound' – so people talking to brands, not the other way round, and so it is likely to be a customer care tool – think using WhatsApp to talk to a company about your order, or to complain about something, book an appointment – probably by video call for the foreseeable future – and so on.

Already Hyandai India has turned to WhatsApp to handle all its customer care, using WhatsApp Business for booking a car service, providing service updates, sending rich media content, sending repair invoices and capturing customer feedback. To build consumer trust and allow Hyundai customers to verify that they are interacting with an official account Hyundai uses a verified business profile on WhatsApp.

NOT THE ONLY GAME IN TOWN

With such mighty growth in use, you'd be forgiven for thinking then that WhatsApp was set to be the only game in town for interaction between brands and consumers and vice versa. Where we also talk to our favourite retailers and brands using social media and messenger, text, phone and iMessage, WhatsApp is pulling away as the channel of choice.

But Google has other ideas. Spurred on by the uptake of WhatsApp – and peeved that so many Apple users love iMessage – it has taken on the mantle of creating what it bills as Text 2.0. It wants a slice of the messaging pie and wants to do it by making text even better.

While many of us think that WhatsApp has already done that, Google's proposed Rich Communications Service (RCS) has other ideas.

RCS is an easy-to-use, feature-rich, interactive, cross-operator – so it works like text, you can message someone from you Vodafone-connected phone who is on O2 – advanced messaging platform that will be available on all mobile devices.

Google stresses that RCS also serves as a powerful, private platform for direct marketing that operators can offer to brands.

The idea is that people open SMS much more readily than they do email marketing and this will offer the same opening rate but with much better content – content that you can shop from and interact with.

So far, so good: but with WhatsApp already so established – and now so popular that world governments have been using it as their preferred comms channel to frightened citizens and subjects during lockdown – is anyone going to use WhatsApp?

Synchronoss, a messaging, digital and IoT products provider behind the RCS-based +Message service launched by three major Japanese operators in May 2018, asked a focus group about their current messaging behaviour and introduced them to RCS.

"When asked about their perception of messaging services today, participants perceive a clear distinction between 'messaging' and 'texting'," says Glenn Lurie, President and CEO, Synchronoss. "'Messaging' is reserved for messaging applications, such as Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp or Instagram, while 'texting' is considered to sit outside of this messaging arena and is a different activity entirely. For consumers, texting is fool-proof."

ROOM FOR BOTH?

But where is RCS: no one I know uses it. While RCS hasn't really got its marketing message straight yet, it is aimed at doing something very different to WhatsApp and that WhatsApp is simply doing 'business' in the absence of a decent business messaging platform.

For starters, RCS isn't really aimed at being a personal messaging app: it has been developed to offer a range of services that will tickle the fancy 0f brands and businesses. WhatsApp is, currently, primarily a P2P messaging app that happens to have some business applications.

Secondly, Google wants to use RCS to bolster its core business – advertising – and so the key driver is going to be commercial. WhatsApp, owned by Facebook, is more a service in search of monetisation if it can get it.

That said, with more people using WhatsApp while in lockdown than ever before and with many new features likely to be added to it in the coming years, it will be interesting to see where RCS gets to.

THE PRICE IS WRONG?

Currently, GSMA figures suggest that some 88 operators have launched RCS services, with 403 million active monthly users. It forecast the market value would hit $74 billion by 2021.

But right now, that is a small slice of the 3 billion mobile users out there – and a faction of the 2 billion WhatsApp users predicted.

The thing that seems to be putting businesses off using RCS is pricing. There is something of a mystery around whether it is per campaign, per message, per interaction – and then what that cost might be.

The problem is that RCS isn't like SMS – nor is it SMS 2.0. It encourages ongoing conversation and working out who pays for that between consumers and brands – especially if the message is initiated by the consumer to contact the brand as with WhatsApp.

Do we face a world where consumers have to pay to complain? Or do brands have to stump up to allow consumers to complain at them?

The classic view that WhatsApp is in-bound and RCS is inherently outbound also raises the prospect of consumers using two messaging platforms to interact with brands – WhatsApp to talk to brands and RCS to be marketed to.

Mobilesquared believes that a token-based system is how RCS will work. It suggests that a consumer would purchase a block of RCS tokens from their RCS provider or network operator and that different types of RCS messages would use different numbers of tokens.

If you were sending a simple image then you might use one token, but if you had a scrollable element, or button options, then you would use two.

How this would work in reality is unclear, as there will be almost infinite numbers of ways that an RCS message could be presented.

The whole pricing of business RCS is still in utter chaos and without a universally agreed approach, RCS simply can't – and won't – be used.

And with WhatsApp already now more firmly entrenched in the consumer psyche than ever thanks to the global pandemic and lockdown, it may be sometime before we see RCS – and we are unlikely to see RCS become SMS 2.0.

Mobility as a service: the transport revolution

While travel has been temporarily suspended under lockdown, development of the tie up between mobile and mobility has continued apace. When we reemerge into a life where we can travel, things could be very different. **Zoran Vasiljev** explains

Today, 55% of the world's population lives in urban areas, a proportion that is expected to increase to 68% by 2050, according to UN research. In any city, mobility is among key concerns; going to school, college and office, taking public transportation, bike, scooter or a car - life in the city is life on the go. Demand for mobility cuts across demographics and social structures.

Right now, mobility in cities is provided in a chain of fragmented transportation vehicles and platforms and is not comprehended as a unified service. Although some cities have made huge progress in ways they facilitate mobility, the realities of public transportation can be quite harsh for those using it.

Think of the hassle still involved in taking a taxi, metro and bus when coming back from a business trip. Transportation and parking can be a nightmare in summer or winter seasons. Major concerts, happenings and sports events are putting extra pressure on services and infrastructure. In large metropolitan areas, public transportation receives constant attention from local governments and authorities, and there are constant demands for improvements.

A TRANSPORT REVOLUTION OF THE 21ST CENTURY?

Rising mobility combined with the rise of urbanization all over the world has created a horizon of opportunities for developing creative and innovative solutions that will address some of the pain points. Alternative transportation methods like park-and-ride, car-sharing and bike & scooter rentals have emerged. A trend away from individual car ownership, combined with alternative transportation opens up huge possibilities in a paradigm that has come to be known as Mobility-as-a-Service (MaaS).

MaaS is the integration of various transport services into a single mobility service, accessible on demand. MaaS operator facilitates a diverse menu of transport options, be they public transport, ride-, car- or bike-sharing, taxi or car rental/lease in various combinations. It is envisioned as a flexible and adaptable system of transportation that, through the use of a single application and a single payment channel, solves the inconvenient parts of individual journeys and multiple ticketing and payment operations.

Even though it's in its early stages, MaaS is already perceived as the biggest transport revolution of the 21st century in circles that are invested in the future of transportation. And it's easy to see why. The paradigm has the potential to introduce tremendous benefits in public and alternative transportation services. Instead of booking and paying for all the transport options separately, users could order and pay for one thing only - transportation from location A to location B. In this model, the number of rides, vehicles and their types becomes irrelevant. End users don't have to worry about topping up debit cards, buying tickets or paying in cash. The city journey could become a more fluid, integrated experience.

A successful MaaS service also brings new business models and ways to organise and operate various transport options. Since the digitization of mass transit is already changing the face of public transport, cloud-based technologies and mobile phones offer new perspectives that go hand in hand with new demands. Mobile phones and telco-operated services are sitting at the very core of MaaS enablement.

CARRIER BILLING HOLDS THE KEY

Carrier billing is suited for transactions like the ones needed in parking or ticketing public transport. But with new demands, comes a new problem that direct carrier billing might solve. A diverse and customizable ticketing system is of great importance to the transport of the future. Providers must always ensure that their system is secure and developed under open standards that many companies can share. That way a single app and payment channel can be introduced. Mobile payments offer pay-as-you-go solutions that are a necessity and with their four of five-step payment process, you can collect the purchase easy and fast, with no additional paperwork or crowds. And last but not least, it offers a personalized client experience.

Carrier billing solution can give the client payment access regardless of their bank card or cellphone type, with an app, or via SMS so the days where we filled our purse with different cards and tickets are gone.

RCS: NEW LEVELS OF EASE AND ENGAGEMENT

According to Juniper Research, Rich Communication Services (RCS) will be among the top 10 tech trends in years to come. RCS is the new generation of SMS that is aiming at replacing traditional SMS messages with a text-message system that is richer and can transmit multimedia. The potential for such a service is huge because it offers companies the ability to create branded messages with incorporated multimedia, suggested reply buttons, and develop a relationship through two-way communication possibilities.

GSMA estimates that there are more than 350 million active users of RCS services. The number is expected to grow, as more and more telco networks and device manufacturers adopt the new standard. North America and Western Europe are leading in adoption, and it can be expected that those parts of the world will be the first ones to experience the benefits of RCS in services and communications across industries.

RCS has potential in the MaaS paradigm in terms of rich notifications that can be delivered to transport users, in order to engage them and make their journey easier. Location capabilities, carousels, buttons and video content will likely get integrated into Mobility-as-a-Service solutions of the future.

Related to this is the omnichannel communications capacity. It is important in providing failover mechanisms - via SMS for instance, in cases where users can't receive a notification via RCS, Viber or WhatsApp. This approach also provides better communication with the end-user of the transport service. It enables communication through the user's preferred channel - Viber, WhatsApp, SMS or email. All these channels and services are easy to integrate through the API, and the solution provider handles maintenance, infrastructure and optimization.

INSTANT AND RELIABLE ID VIA MOBILE PHONE

Taking a step back, it's right to assume that we will be relying on mobile devices more than ever before, whether it is through personal usage or launching new business initiatives. Mobile devices reflect customers' identity in apps, data, and activities they engage in, and for that reason alone many business strategies are putting mobile devices at the centre of growth plans.

According to a survey "Say Goodbye to Passwords" by IDG, 89% of security leaders believe that mobile devices will serve as a digital ID to access enterprise services, emphasising how ineffective the passwords are in protecting our privacy. 67% of enterprise execs are less confident about the security of their mobile devices compared to other IT assets, according to Forbes. In handling a complex system that requires personal and bank data, like MaaS, an efficient security and ID validating system is of great importance.

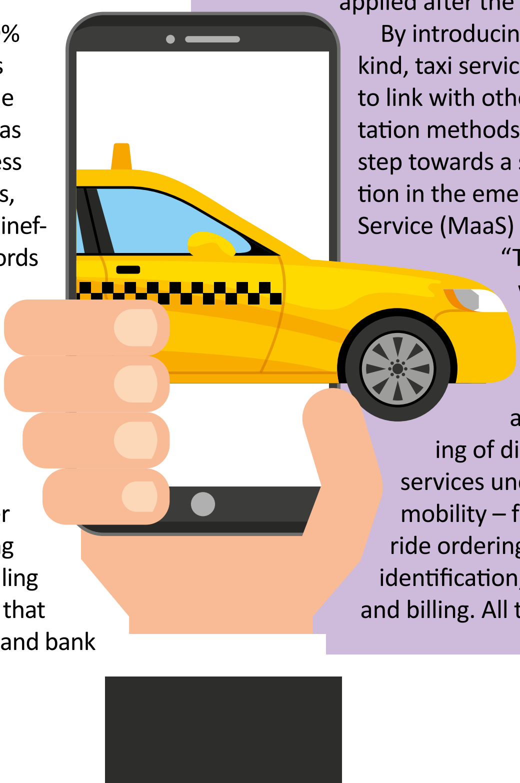
Mobile Identity is a verification solution based on the information mobile operators have about their subscribers. Mobile Identity matches the user's phone number with the mobile operator databases and verifies e.g. subscribing to a service, creating an account or making a mobile purchase with minimal interruption of user experience.

Mobile Identity enables user-friendly use cases that extend far beyond the capabilities of current authentication methods. In the MaaS paradigm, using MI to authenticate each payment or app install via Silent Mobile Verification, SIM swap checks to further ensure the identity of the rider and protect from fraud and hacks, or form filling for signups and similar cases enhance the experience and the security in one convenient service.

Mobile Identity is at the heart of the digital economy, improving customer experience, customer onboarding and their security throughout the journey, both physical and digital.

MaaS is the next step in transportation and with it comes a new set of challenges that will push digital and mobile industry in its next chapter. Mobile devices are becoming our IDs in the digital world and soon enough they could become an essential component of our mobility.
To ensure a smooth and easy travelling across urban areas will remain a major concern of cities and municipalities, as well as of technology providers that will look to come up with innovative technologies and solutions in the area in years to come.

Zoran Vasiljev is Group CEO at Centili



iTaxi launches direct carrier billing with Centili and Play

iTaxi, the leading Polish taxi hailing marketplace has launched a new ticketing model supported by direct carrier billing, which enables its customers to charge taxi rides to their post-paid plans with Play, the biggest telco operator in the country.

Technical integration is the work of the internationally awarded payments and billing company Centili. It is one of the first implementations of direct carrier billing in ticketing in the EU taxi industry, enabling the cost of an individual ride to be calculated upfront and seamlessly charged to the rider's mobile plan. This makes it different to traditional taxi charges which can only be applied after the ride.

By introducing tickets of this kind, taxi services become easier to link with other urban transportation methods, which is a major step towards a stronger participation in the emerging Mobility as a Service (MaaS) model.

"The integration with carriers, which we enable on multiple levels, is the key to a smooth functioning of digital and remote services underlying urban mobility – from app-based ride ordering, user reach and identification, to engagement and billing. All this is orchestrated via mobile phones, with the mobile number at the centre of enablement" says Lazar Pasajlic, Regional Manager Europe at Centili.

The updated iTaxi mobile app allows users to set Play as the default payment method, or to easily use it alongside other methods. The user experience is the same as with credit card payments, involving only a few taps on the phone screen.

"Our customers can now charge taxi rides to their existing account with Play, a company with considerable reputation and standing in providing payments services. We have introduced another natively mobile capability, as we continue to build cutting-edge mobility services for our customers," says Tomasz Soczówka, Strategic Advisory & Partnerships Manager at iTaxi.

This pioneering project could facilitate further innovation in the European urban mobility ecosystem. With a population of 40 million, Poland has a booming innovation scene in which mobile network operators are playing a major role. The country has already seen direct carrier billing applied to the areas of parking, electrical scooters rentals and now taxi rides, with a clear vision of becoming a part of a new public transportation model known as Mobility as a Service.

"We are excited about what's next in smart city travel as we continue to expand our active role in the space. We're looking forward to working with startups and partners to unlock new opportunities via integrations that will take urban mobility to the next level," saya ŁukaszPerzyński, Head of Direct Carrier Billing at Play.

How Merchants can grow their business by learning how to fight fraud the right way

Fraud is a fact of life in business – but it needn't be an end to business for merchants if they look at how they react to fraud and deal with it. Here **David Lotfi** explains what that means in practice

Every merchant knows the story: It's Friday night and you receive an email from the operator: "We have too many customer complaints, so we need an OTP flow by Monday".

Noooooooo!

You know you're going to have a horrible weekend believing that your ROI and conversion rates are set for a drastic drop.

Yes, fraud is a pain, but it doesn't have to be fatal and you certainly don't need to lose money – or sleep – over it. Fraud is not the merchant's fault.

Let's start off by focusing on the positive. Few industries do customer acquisition and billing efficiency better than we do. An exciting environment full of promise and healthy competition means we have become virtual experts in ROI. That's the good news. The not so good news is that web-based criminals have also noticed the potential of what we do and fraud on the Internet has consequently skyrocketed.

Since 2015, fraud has steadily emerged as mobile industry enemy number one. This means you can take heart in the fact that the problem is not confined to your specific organization – it's a massive industry challenge that spans the entire globe and is threatening the very existence of the micropayment and digital advertising industries.

Boom times for fraudsters mean we are all experiencing problems with clients, partners, carriers and merchants that are centred on billing flows being cut and revenue loss.

No victim can be guilty of a crime perpetrated by a criminal and the same is true of merchants. Even if as everywhere, there can be some bad players, most merchants are purely innocent victims of widespread fraud. The key to beating this modern-day scourge is to firstly understand it. And when it comes to understanding online fraud, we must firstly understand that the industry's response to online crime follows a certain predictable pattern.

How everyone reacts when confronted with fraud

The initial situation – The process begins with everything seemingly just perfect. Industry players see that the market for their products and services is growing and they are happy with their work and so are their clients and customers.

The crisis – Fraud appears out of the blue and the effect is instantaneous and particularly vicious because it masks what is really going on.

Denial – At first, your revenue appears as if it is growing and the result is that you are in denial. You believe those good results you're seeing are coming from your good work, not fraud! "I don't have fraud, I have trusted partners, it is just the hard work that we have done on the landing page that is paying".

Anger – When those first nagging doubts turn to reality and you finally understand that those new transactions are fake, you become angry at the fraudster and at the operators who you believe are turning against you are payment flows begin to be cut.

Bargaining – You try to negotiate with the operator: "Yes maybe some part of my traffic is fraudulent, but I'll deal with it, don't cut my payment flow!"

Depression – Eventually, operators are not reassured, revenues become lower than ever and depression settles in.

Acceptance – This is when you either believe that you can't do anything about fraud and that you need to accept a reduced performance or you need to find new solutions.

Rest assured all of this is a normal reaction to a very common problem and you are not alone.

HOW TO REACT TO FRAUD THE RIGHT WAY

The online world is notoriously unsecure, but you can get through security challenges with the right partners. Fraud is not a death sentence, it is criminality that needs to be managed and, indeed, it can be beaten. Already, some markets like France and Belgium have more or less totally banished fraud on Direct Carrier Billing.

What the usual pattern of reaction to fraud teaches us is that we need to leave depression behind us and get to grips with accepting that fraud is a challenge that needs logical organization and action to beat.

You can organise yourself effectively with solutions that worked for others and you can even turn the situation on its head and build better trust and achieve more growth that before.

Most solutions you are using now to protect yourself are probably inefficient. Fraud is a problem for everyone, but most of the solutions offered don't really work. Numerous companies are selling anti-fraud solutions and even fraudsters are selling anti-fraud solutions, with predictably poor results.

If you look at relatively safe markets like France and Belgium, you can see that the only kind of company that can help you needs three things:

Independence – Advertisers are competing very hard in carrier billing, anti-fraud system access sensitive data, anti-fraud can block subscriptions. There should be no doubt among the players on why a conversion is validated or not. The solution used cannot belong to one of their competitors.

Cybersecurity focus – The second component is for the company to be 100% focused on cybersecurity. The market deserves a specialist and API first-oriented company. When dealing with fraud, one must absolutely direct all resources towards the overriding goal of cybersecurity.

Expertise on fraud – You can't send a generalist to do an expert's job. Only a dedicated fraud expert can properly understand the ins and outs of the market and know the needs and issues all players are facing because of fraud.

David Lotfi is CEO of Evina. Evina is the one company that ticks all the boxes above. It is no surprise then that we have played a pivotal role in securing the French and Belgian markets, providing a welcome boost to the entire industry and making all players more successful.

Going off-message

With governments using WhatsApp and frightened citizens looking for news and hope, there has been a rise in message fraud like never before. **Paul Skeldon** takes a look at what is happening in the UK to tackle it

The proliferation of messaging to get government and business information to consumers during the coronavirus pandemic has also seen the inevitable rise in scam messaging.

The problem is global, but in the UK mobile, banking and finance industries along with the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) have joined forces to prevent fraudsters sending scam text messages that seek to exploit the Covid-19 crisis.

The collaboration is part of an ongoing industry initiative by Mobile Ecosystem Forum (MEF), Mobile UK and UK Finance, supported by the NCSC, to help identify and block fraudulent SMS texts and protect messages from legitimate businesses and organisations.

Text messaging scams which trick consumers into sending money or sharing their account details with fraudsters are known as 'Smishing' (or phishing by SMS). Criminals send bogus texts which appear to come from a trusted sender, for example, in the case of the Government's mass-text campaign UK_Gov.

These messages often contain links to fake websites or phone numbers using sophisticated social engineering techniques to trick the victim into revealing their personal and financial information or sending money. Criminals will also often use a technique called "spoofing", which can make a message appear in a chain of texts alongside previous genuine messages from that organisation.

As part of the cross-stakeholder trial, MEF has developed the SMS SenderID Protection Registry which allows organisations to register and protect the message headers used when sending text messages to their customers. The Registry limits the ability of fraudsters to send messages impersonating a brand by checking whether the sender is the genuine registered party.

50 bank and Government brands are currently being protected through the trial with 172 trusted SenderIDs registered to date. Over 400 unauthorised variants are being blocked on an ever-growing blacklist, including 70 senderIDs relating to the Government's Coronavirus campaign.

14 banks and Government agencies including HMRC and DVLA are participating in the ongoing trial which is supported by BT/EE, o2, Three and Vodafone.

The trial also has the support of the UK's leading messaging providers including BT's Smart Messaging Business, Commify, Dynamic Mobile Billing, Firetext, Fonix Mobile, HGC Global Communications Limited, IMImobile, mGage, OpenMarket, SAP Digital Interconnect a division of SAP, Sinch, TeleSign, Twilio and Vonage.

In the last six months, the cross-stakeholder working group has seen a significant drop in fraudulent messages being sent to the UK consumers of the participating merchants.

Dr Ian Levy, Technical Director at the NCSC, said: "We are pleased to be supporting this experiment which is yielding promising results. The UK Government's recent mass-text campaign on Covid-19 has demonstrated the need for such industry collaboration in order to protect consumers from these kind of scams."

Mobile UK's Head of Policy & Communications, Gareth Elliott added that "Mobile companies work hard to protect their customers from fraud and the contribution from the industry to the Registry will help reduce the number of scam texts pretending to be from trusted brands. This gives much-needed protection against fraud, including for the most vulnerable customers."

As part of the Coronavirus campaign, consumers have also been reminded to follow the advice of the Take Five to Stop Fraud campaign and remember that criminals are experts at impersonating people, organisations and the police. Customers can report suspected spam text texts to their mobile network provider by forwarding them to 7726.

Katy Worobec, Managing Director of Economic Crime at UK Finance, said: "This initiative shows how by working together with the government, law enforcement and other sectors, we are protecting the public from these cruel scams. We would urge consumers to remain vigilant of criminals exploiting the Covid-19 outbreak to commit fraud and report suspicious texts by forwarding the original message to 7726, which spells SPAM on your keypad. Always follow the advice of the Take Five to Stop Fraud campaign and avoid clicking on links in any unsolicited text messages in case it's a scam."

Mike Fell, Head of Cyber Operations HM Revenue and Customs, who were one of the first Government agencies to report Covid-19 text scams said: "This trial builds on the success of an HMRC pilot, conducted with telecoms providers, which resulted in a 90% reduction in reports of the most convincing HMRC-branded SMS scams. We are happy to collaborate with MEF and partners to take forward our work to safeguard the UK public from such SMS-related scams."

MEF's COO, Joanne Lacey summarised: "All stakeholders involved in business messaging have a responsibility to follow industry best practice and proactively work together to be one step ahead of the fraudsters. The SMS SenderID Protection Registry is a tactical solution to mitigate smishing and spoofing, backed by MEF's A2P SMS Code of Conduct. Through the Registry, the industry has been able to support the UK Government's campaign and demonstrate the vital role of messaging not least in times of emergency and crisis."

More engagement, more fraud

With the boom in digital content and services, messaging and marketing brought about by the global pandemic, there is an inevitable downside: where there is success, there is fraud. Jarvis Todd investigates

Perhaps unsurprisingly in the current climate there's been a major focus across the board on digital commerce. That means more opportunities to deploy engagement and billing technologies to support soaring demand for a range of telemedia VAS and content propositions.

In lockdown – and probably beyond – games platforms are busier than ever, radio competitions have never been more popular, help line traffic is rocketing and call centres are maxed out. Spare a thought too for those poor singles that are simply looking for love in these difficult times.

Early reports suggest that in order to tackle the challenges of social distancing many (primarily male) dating subscribers are migrating across to more adult services and really ramping up their premium messaging activities.

So, with business "taking care of itself", your only concern needs to be the health and wellbeing of your families, friends and colleagues – right? Well not quite, because as any business increases its digital exposure [to hit bigger revenue targets]and investment shifts towards even more digital channels, they become more exposed to digital threats.

> As any business increases its digital exposure and investment shifts towards more digital channels, they become more exposed to digital threats

So, we asked Geoffrey Cleaves, Head of Secure-D at Upstream, for his views on the current situation and he concurred that we are of course relatively "lucky" to work in the digital world and have the luxury of discussing trends and opportunities. Long a driver of growth, the digital economy may now be the salvation of the economy.

"I predict an even increased importance of digital and telemedia industries, with more and more individuals attempting to get in the business. Either that or the hand sanitiser business," he says.

He adds: "At Upstream we carry on supporting the digital growth of our mobile operator customers keeping people connected, secure and informed. Bridging the digital divide has taken on new meaning since the start of this outbreak and Upstream is pressing on to help mobile operators in con-

nectivity, content, security and UX."

WHAT ARE THE KEY FRAUD THREATS?

Whilst the majority of the world is pulling together, there are certainly some darker forces acting to make a profit from the current situation.

"At Secure-D we've seen a sharp increase in bad actors publishing 'leisure' apps on the Google Play Store which trick users into subscribing for premium services," says Cleaves. "The types of apps that are springing up are ones that offer a way for people to pass the time stuck at home. For examples, funny videos or puzzle games."

Cleaves also outlines some examples of malicious apps to watch out for including; Atlas Box, Puzzle Addict and Video Lounge. Also beware of apk package names starting with com.xam. Android apps are identified by their package name, which are usually three dot separated words such as com.android.clock. Many of the malware apps have a package name that begins with com.xam.

INTERNET TRAFFIC IN EMERGING MARKETS

Over the past 30 days internet traffic has increased by 6% in Africa and decrease by 5% in South East Asia, especially peaks in Thailand relating to COVID-19 news sites. Whilst It's hard to make a direct correlation, the theory is that that SE Asia is generally emerging while Africa is generally entering lockdown, Brazil is largely flat.
Being in lockdown means prepaid customers will find it difficult to get out the front door to top up their data bundles. In the meantime, malware could be eating into those data bundles.

Cleaves continues: "I suspect we may see a drop in mobile internet traffic (and successful billing attempts) in predominantly prepaid markets while lockdowns are in force."

Enter solutions like ConnectU by Vodacom in South Africa that allow users to access free content aimed at social development offering a variety of essential services (education, health advice, news). This is a zero-rated portal supported by our platform zero-D".

So, there you have it – while the telemedia industry might well be safe enough, please continue to avoid both personal and commercial infections as you promote more premium digital applications into a relatively healthy digital marketplace.

5 ways to detect cyber threats today

Cybercriminals are an unfortunate fact of life in 2020 and businesses of all sizes are at risk from their malicious intentions.

The key to minimising the risks of a cyberattack is to know how to spot when you are under threat. There are a variety of ways to achieve this.

Here are the best ways to detect a cyber threat in 2020.

Email Phishing
Phishing is when cybercriminals, usually via email, pretend to be a legitimate account or customer and convince users to open an email attachment or click on a link. Either action will result in exposure to malware of some kind. Make sure that employees are aware of how to identify potentially risky communication, and they also know not to click on suspicious attachments or links.

Endpoint Monitoring
Most cyberattacks start with the individual and that means that all members of your workforce that act as endpoint users need robust cybersecurity training sessions. Contextual awareness is key, because the faster that someone knows that their devices or networks have been compromised, the quicker your accident response can act.

Suspicious Network Activity
Again, this is all about ensuring that your team is aware of the signs of a cyber threat. Suspicious activity can be a sign that a system has been attacked or is currently under attack. One of the most common signs is to find that password access to your system is denied. This indicates that a password has been used by a malicious actor who is making system changes to lock you out. Make sure that password management is a priority in your business.

Network Slowdown
Network traffic can spike during a breach, so if your system is slower than usual, this can often be a sign that you are being attacked. If a network slowdown is reported by any member of your team, it's a good idea to launch your incident response plan immediately. Even if your team discovers no breach, it is better to test than simply hope that network slowdown is normal.

Adware and Pop-Ups
Browsing the Internet exposes endpoints to potential dangers and pop-ups, adware, and malvertising are all subjects that you need to have some awareness of. Know how to identify risky online activity and ensure that your teams are aware of what they can and can't click on when using the business network or any business devices. However, you should also ensure that they practice security protocols on their own devices as well, especially in a BYOD environment.

Is roaming set to be a victim of coronavirus?

The collapse in travel is hitting global roaming revenues hard – and the damage is immediate and may be sustained. **Paul Skeldon** hears from leading analysts as to what the future currently holds

Roaming has had a rough time. It used to be the golden egg-laying service for network operators, giving them the licence to print money when anyone travelled abroad but still wanted to stay in touch.

That all changed when the EU decided that, across Europe at least, that was unacceptable.

Then the rise of 5G looked like it might offset some of this decline, with the level of services on offer – as well as the emergence of RCS – looked set to add some 1.1 billion new subscribers worldwide and some new roaming opportunities.

However, biology had other ideas. The Coronavirus pandemic has made pretty much all industries worldwide hit the pause button. One of the biggest hit by the lockdown, aside from retail and hospitality, has been travel. No one is going nowhere, as they say. And that means roaming has hit a brick wall.

In fact, according to Juniper Research, the impact of Coronavirus on the international travel industry could cost operators over $25 billion in lost revenue during the next 9 months.

Juniper Research examined two possible scenarios: a medium and high impact, believing a low impact is now not possible. The high impact scenario assumes that a severe disruption to international travel will continue for 9 months, with travel restrictions and a reduced demand for international travel continuing.

In this case, the resulting impact on operators' international roaming revenue would be significant.

NO END IN SIGHT FOR TRAVEL ISSUES

In the high impact scenario, Juniper Research believes that over 650 million passenger trips will be cancelled due to Coronavirus over the next 9 months. This is over 80% of the anticipated international passenger trips that were previously forecast before the spread of the virus.

The research assumes that over half of all roaming revenue for the year will be affected, amounting to $25 billion in lost revenue. The research also highlighted the period between June and August as of particular significance when the demand for international travel is high. It forecast that operators could lose up to $12 billion in roaming revenue alone in these three months.

In terms of the overall impact on operators, it must be noted however that global roaming revenue only accounts for approximately 6% of total operator-billed revenue per year, limiting the hit on the industry.

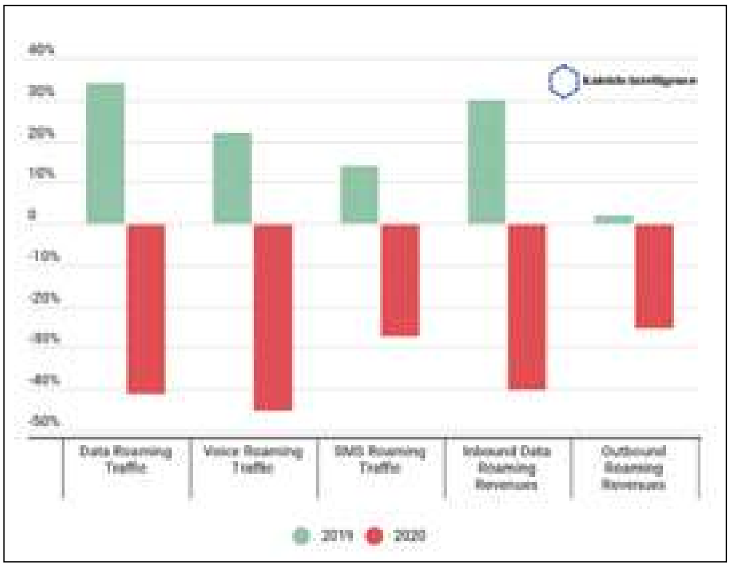
NO MITIGATION STRATEGIES

Given the nature of the international travel industry, the research anticipated that there will be no strategies available to operators to mitigate this loss. It forecast that services, such as virtual conferencing, will offer businesses an alternative to international travel, but will offer no benefit to operators.

Additionally, the research highlighted that travel cancelled due to the spread of Coronavirus is unlikely to be rebooked. As a result, this loss of roaming revenue is unlikely to be recovered once the international travel industry resumes normal service.

IT COULD GET WORSE

Analysts at Kaleido expects a global decline in travel numbers in 2020. “Our early December 2019 projection for global international travel anticipated a 5% annual rise in border arrivals,” says Nitin Bhas, Chief of Strategy & Insights at Kaleido Intelligence. “Our latest projection, developed in early April 2020 with the assumption that many travel restrictions will be lifted by the end of the northern hemisphere’s summer, estimates a 45% fall in international travel volume, with only 826 million trips anticipated globally for 2020.
This will indeed depend on any further travel impact in Q3 and Q4 2020 and also if there will be any further waves of Coronavirus this year.”



> The latest projections developed in April 2020 with an estimate that travel restrictions will lift in late summer in Europe sees a 41% drop in roaming

In fact, Kaleido estimates roaming data traffic to fall by 41% to reach 395 billion MBs in 2020, equivalent to 368 PB (Petabytes). This will translate into wholesale revenues between $2.7-$3 billion from data traffic, compared to nearly $5 billion in 2019.

In comparison, voice traffic will fall by 45% in 2020.

However, outbound roaming revenues are expected to fall by between 25-30% in 2020, with retail spend per roamer potentially increasing by active roamers in 2020

Bhas adds: “Understandably, this means that there will be an impact on mobile roamers and usage around the world. For that reason, we have revised our forecasts for global travel, mobile roamers and outbound and inbound roaming traffic and revenues.”

Help minimising disruption for the voice and messaging industry

Help with the disruption caused to carriers by the coronavirus pandemic is at hand. For example, Vox Carrier has introduced a monetisation audit for mobile network operators (MNOs) and digital service providers (DSPs) to enable them to minimise the impact of declining roaming revenues and changing user behaviours.

The audit examines routing optimisation, operational efficiencies and revenue leakage from fraud in voice and SMS. The audit has been developed to offer MNOs and DSPs a sustainable and effective path forward as they manage the immediate impact they are seeing on roaming revenues, while protecting their network, increasing long-term profitability, and enhancing customer experience.

Juniper Research estimated that more than 650 million passenger trips will be cancelled over the next nine months due to COVID-19, with travel bans costing the mobile industry $25 billion between March 2020 and the end of the year. The research forecasts that operators could lose up to $12 billion in roaming revenue alone between June and August.

“Our monetisation audit will provide insights to help MNOs and DSPs during these unprecedented times. While roaming revenues cannot be recovered, there is an opportunity to increase profitability in A2P SMS or international voice through fighting fraud,” says Ehsan Ahmadi, CEO at Vox Carrier. “This is a challenging time for our industry and we’re trying to offer solutions that will minimise disruption and enable operators and service providers to continue to offer critical communications solutions to their customers.”

Vox Carrier helps its partners address the challenges they have around voice and messaging monetisation through efficiently expanding reach, optimising operations, enhancing user experience and mitigating fraud. It serves MNOs, DSPs, carriers, and enterprises worldwide, delivering a range of solutions including A2P messaging, service monetisation and operational outsourcing.

“This pandemic has emphasised the critical role of telecommunication service providers to businesses, communities and users of all kinds. At Vox Carrier we want to play our part and provide mobile operators, DSPs and enterprises the tools they need to respond to this challenge. We are evolving and adapting our solutions through listening and understanding our customers. We have the expertise, agility, and the technology to help solve these challenges with our managed service solutions,” says Nicholas Nikrouyan, CCO & Chief of Staff at Vox Carrier.

Keeping the adult industry up during lockdown

Under lockdown there has been a spike in visits to adult sites, chat sites and even dating – but they are happening in different ways that before. Here **New Media Services** outline some of the changes

With the current economic climate which is a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic, many businesses without online presence have seen a decline, often even resorting to closures.

As the majority of the population have accepted that social distancing is one of the main ways to avoid the risk of virus exposure, the world has turned to the internet to go about their daily lives.

From deliveries of basic necessities, sourcing of news, movies, music and other forms of entertainment, people have become increasingly reliant to being online.

In an effort to battle the lack of social interactions brought about by the abrupt change in normalcy, many persons have flocked to websites, apps and non-physical socialization.

BEING GROWN UPS

This has been quite evident in the Adult Industry. As most services offered are of an online nature, it has become a convenient way to stay entertained. Given the ample amount of time and relative ease of access, dating sites, cam sites and other adult services have had an uptick in activity.

Perhaps predictably, traffic to adult sites has seen a massive spike since the European wide lockdown in March – and many industry watchers think it is likely to continue.

According to Pornhub, there has been a “spike” in traffic since March – and a 10% rise in the number of people paying using Bitcoin for its Premium service.

CHAT AND DATING SERVICES

Chat services have increased due to the more constant exchange of communications; refunds for services rendered has decreased as a direct result of actual usage. Users now demand for more content to be available while they are stuck at home.

Dating sites gained higher subscription and membership rates since users are at home and almost always online. Cam sites has seen a parallel increase of subscribers as well as model availability.

Although this pandemic is a definite concern, it has also given rise to a rare opportunity for higher customer engagement, conversion and support. There as been a well-documented increase in chat traffic around dating, as dating now takes place via talking and video, rather than face to face.

MORE TIME

The social distancing recommendation by various countries and states have increased the time each person has on a day-to-day basis. The removed commute time, lower required work hours and time spent on errands have all be redirected.

While some spend time on their favourite social media platforms, others on music and video providers, and some on hobbies, this extra time has also given the adult industry the boost it needed in terms of increased traffic.

MORE OPPORTUNITIES

Having users with more time also means that adult-oriented services also need to focus on opportunities to improve, further increase and retain users. With this they will require more resources to hopefully cover the span of this pandemic and to maintain the interest moving beyond the current situation.

This may vary depending on approach, but it would be a prime opportunity for many businesses in this industry to gather data, produce more content, improve on customer interactions and ultimately use these improvements as a way to push for further growth in the long-run.

New Media Services

#SP & AGGREGATOR

mobivate
global telco innovation

We are seasoned mobile billing experts in Africa's emerging economies

MobiPay is our mobile billing solution incorporating:

- Billing gateways
- Subscription portals
- Direct Carrier Billing
- Premium SMS
- UK Charity Shortcodes
- Single API integration
- Click to Buy
- Click to Subscribe

info@mobivate.com +44 207 267 5222 www.mobivate.com

---

dynamicmobilebilling

Dynamic Mobile Billing is a global provider of mobile and payment solutions including:

- Direct Carrier Billing
- SMS Billing
- Voice Number Ranges
- Bulk Messaging
- Voice Short-codes
- Virtual Mobile Numbers

www.dmb-uk.com
Tel: +44 (0) 808 206 0808 Email: sales@dmb-uk.com

PreferredTEL

-PreferredTel is a leader provider of International Premium Rate Numbers Solutions
-World wide coverage
-Highest payout
-IVR services
-Bulk SMS , International premium SMS
contact@preferredtelemedia.com

---

international premiums

International Premiums is a worldwide telecom media services Provider and Aggregator.

International Premiums has acquired the sole distribution rights for Albania, Burundi, Central African Republic, Comoros Islands, Congo, East Timor, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Guyana, Liberia, Tonga, Morocco, Poland, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Vanuatu offering the HIGHEST Payouts with monthly, biweekly and weekly payments.

e : info@interprems.com
w: www.interprems.com

- OTT-X next generation app platform
- UK Premium, National, Toll-Free, Personal & Geo Numbers
- International PRS, Geo & Toll-Free
- Indemnified debit/credit card payments for service providers
- SMS, PSMS & Mobile Billing
- Voip Wholesale CLI & Non-CLI Termination
- Hosted IVR & Conferencing with meet-me
- Global airtime and stored value transfers

sales@12telecom.com
www.12telecom.com

12 TELECOM

MessageCloud

Send | Verify | Numbers | Analyse | Pay

www.messagecloud.com | sales@messagecloud.com
HQ phone: +44 (0)3301 130 243

MEDIATEL
Phone Payment Provider
www.mediatel.com

MAKE SURE YOU CAN BE FOUND

ADVERTISE IN THE LEADING DIRECTORY FOR THE TELEMEDIA INDUSTRY. CONTACT JARVIS FOR RATES ON +44 (0)7711 92 70 92

#MEDIA & MARKETING

veneoverwatch

FIGHT CARRIER BILLING FRAUD
with the industry standard solution

veneoverwatch.io
info@veneoverwatch.io

COOKIES

MOBILE-FIRST PERFORMANCE AGENCY

QUALITY
BEST MEDIA BUYING SERVICE ON PREMIUM CHANNELS

RELIABILITY
WE ARE CERTIFIED GOOGLE PARTNER

COMPLIANCE
OPTICKS AS INTEGRATED ANTIFRAUD SYSTEM

ARE YOU A PUBLISHER? JOIN OUR NETWORK

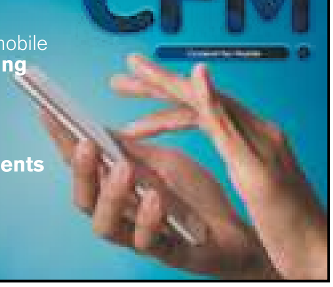
www.cookies.digital
advertising@cookies.digital

ARE YOU AN ADVERTISER? GET IN TOUCH WITH US

#TECH PROVIDER

#CONTENT PROVIDER

#BILLING



#NETWORK OPERATOR

#SUPPORT SERVICES


kwak.
„LINKING TELECOMS AND MEDIA THROUGH INTERNATIONAL PREMIUM RATE SERVICES“
International Premium Numbers.
Domestic Premium Numbers.
Bulk SMS.
Call Center.
www.kwak-telecom.com
sales@kwak-telecom.com
+357 220 223 18
„Award Winning Micropayment Provider with global Footprint.“
European Business Awards
RSM
LE FONTI AWARDS
WINNER 2017
1000
COMPANIES