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ACCC should have power to break up Telstra	
The newly incorporated Competitive Carriers Coalition (CCC) is proposing a radical review of the regulatory framework, including giving the ACCC power to break up a company where it believes its structure to be anti-competitive.	
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People Telecom to offer IP centrex	
People Telecom, recently merged with Swiftel, is looking to add IP centrex to its portfolio of services for SMEs, and is negotiating to resell ValueNet's service which is based on the VocalData platform.	
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IPO planned for real-time instant messaging technology	
Melbourne-based Azurn International is planning an IPO later this year to develop what it claims is unique real-time unified messaging technology able to convert content between different native XML formats via a proprietary common format, known as Unified XML.	
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Nortel to retrench 3500 & restructure	
Nortel Networks has announced plans to retrench 3500 workers, around 10 percent of its total, and to restructure its organisation into "a single carrier networks organisation supported by customer-facing solutions teams".	
Netgear & Linksys embrace Internet VoIP	
The growing US market for public VoIP services accessed over standard broadband connections has received a significant boost with a number of initiatives involving one of the major VoIP service providers, Vonage and two of the leading suppliers of networking equipment to the residential, SOHO and SME markets: Netgear and Linksys.	
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Niche technology one day, PSTN alternative the next	
Telstra's arguments for the abolition of price caps in its submission to the ACCC's review of the price controls do not stand up to close scrutiny.	
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Another swallow	
KPMG has looked into Australia's broadband future and concluded that public ownership of new infrastructure might be what's needed. Not so long ago that was blasphemy.	
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The week in retrospect	
With the ACCC holding public hearings this week as part of its review of the price cap controls on Telstra, that issue drew a good deal of coverage, especially the Telstra submission. Telstra shelled out \$127 million to buy a UK based IP service provider, and Optus and Vodafone announced plans to share 3G radio infrastructure.	

IN THE NEWS THIS WEEK



Stuart Corner

Just as *Exchange* went to press, Optus and Vodafone announced a heads of agreement to share 3G network sites and radio infrastructure across Australia, although few details were available. Both are using Nokia gear, so that should make life easier.

There has been much coverage of Telstra's submission to the ACCC's review of the price cap regime, but most of it on Telstra's 'threats' (perceived or real) that removal of price caps could lead to it curtailing its social programmes and pushing for timed local calls. Telstra subsequently denied the latter.

The deals between US VoIP provider Vonage and Linksys and Netgear are very interesting given the dominant market position in the US, especially of Linksys. My conversations with People Telecom and my own experience suggest that getting the CPE for VoIP working satisfactorily is not a trivial exercise, and the bundling of the service with the box through many retail outlets, just like broadband, should give it a big boost. Just wait for something similar here. stuart@exchange.com.au

technology

IPO planned for real-time instant messaging technology

Melbourne-based Azurn International is planning an IPO later this year to develop what it claims is unique real-time unified messaging technology able to convert content between different native XML formats via a proprietary common format, known as Unified XML.

The company's first product, an integrated audio and web conferencing system, was launched in July and is already in use with two Melbourne-based law firms, Tolhurst & Emerson and Rogers & Gaylord, on an ASP basis. The company is also in discussions with Primus to take up its technology.

Bala Kumble, Azurn's chief technology officer told *Exchange*: "The whole concept of Unified XML is that you give us a stream of any media type in native XML format: voice, data, video, financial or wireless and we will do the convergence in a single session. The recipient of that information can then decide how he or she would like to receive the information."

There are standard XML formats for a wide variety of information types, but according to Kumble converting between these in real time is extremely challenging. The Azurn technology, he says, is able to do this not only for a single native XML data stream but for multiple streams simultaneously. "Not only can you have conversion from one media type to another but you can have simultaneous access in different formats."

R&D to date has been conducted jointly by Azurn Networks in Boston and Azurn International in Melbourne but the Australian company intends to take full ownership of the intellectual property and is aiming for an IPO in December to raise between \$5 and \$10 million.

"The heart of our intellectual property is bringing different media types into a single XML format," Kumble said. "There are plenty of store and forward systems, but ours leaves it to the A&B parties to decide in real time how they would like to receive and send information."

Additional media formats soon

The product runs as an application under Linux or Windows, and enhancements to support additional information types are ready for release, according to Kumble. "We would like to release email to cellphone and then thin client instant messaging, but we need to look at the market." However he said that a full suite of applications could be released if the right commercial proposal came up.

In addition to working with Primus, Kumble said Azurn has been in "very basic discussions with Telstra". But "We want to rollout a few more applications before we go with large companies".

Azurn is also preparing to establish collaborative R&D programmes at La Trobe and Curtin Universities.

munications solutions. "The ...centre extends our phone-based outbound and inbound sales activities utilising our range of mobile, fixed line telephone and internet products for existing and prospective customers." Optus already operates two call centres in Adelaide, at North Terrace and Technology Park.

7-Eleven stores to offer BlueSkyFrog mobile content

BlueSkyFrog.com, which claims to be Australia's largest mobile content retailer, has joined forces with the 7-Eleven convenience store chain to enable consumers to purchase mobile content such as polyphonic ringtones and games when topping up their prepaid mobile cards at 7-Eleven stores' ePay terminals

WCDMA: 75 handsets, eight million users

The GSM Association says there are now 75 WCDMA 3G handset models on the Market and eight million WCDMA subscribers on 43 commercial networks in 22 countries. A further 10 networks at operating in pre-commercial mode.

INTERNATIONAL

MCI packetises voice with Ericsson's Engine

MCI is to deploy Ericsson's Engine next generation network technology to migrate its US-based international gateway voice traffic from a circuit switched to a VoIP network. MCI says the upgrade will enable it to transport voice traffic worldwide on its IP backbone as well as expand its network functionality and offer next generation services on a global basis.

MCI's Engine deployment includes the Ericsson telephony server - which will provide the voice gateway controller and signalling gateway functions - and the Ericsson media gateway which will provide the VoIP media path converters. By supporting both SIP and H.323, Engine will also "provide MCI the flexibility to connect with global carriers to exchange VoIP traffic regardless of protocol preference".

iPass offers in-flight net access

Remote access service provider iPass has signed an agreement with Con-