



COVID-19 has shown the value of broadband – but we can do more, says Broadband Forum

CEO Robin Mersh highlighted the urgent need to drive work towards future-proof networks at the Opening Plenary of Broadband Forum's virtual Q2 meeting, where a special one-time award was also presented

Fremont, California, 22 June 2020: [Broadband Forum](#) CEO Robin Mersh today congratulated the broadband industry on its response to COVID-19 and how it has risen to the challenge of the unprecedented spike in traffic it brought – but warned the pandemic has highlighted the urgent need for work to continue on automation and bridging the digital divide.

Speaking as Broadband Forum's Q2 meeting took place virtually for the first time in the Forum's history, Mersh said the crisis – which saw lockdowns introduced globally – emphasizes the critical role broadband plays in society. This means, he said, that it is no longer acceptable for nearly half ([45%](#)) of the world's population to remain unconnected.

According to Mersh, the coronavirus outbreak has also further highlighted the growing need for operators to deliver on emerging trends such as zero-touch installations, the Connected Home and the new era of connectivity that 5G is set to bring.

"The introduction of lockdowns brought an exceptional increase in broadband traffic – the growth which operators have been expecting over the next several years suddenly came in a matter of days and weeks, and it is a credit to the industry that networks have delivered so well on this demand," said Mersh. "But the pandemic has shown the importance of prioritizing work to bridge the digital divide with cost-effective 'state of the art' broadband technologies. There is still a lot of work to do to ensure our networks can meet future needs across the world, especially in areas that are currently not connected."

During the first quarter of 2020, [OpenVault](#) reported that broadband usage rose by 47%, compared to the same period in 2019. [Comcast](#) is among operators that put out individual figures, revealing how it reviewed network usage every five minutes and ran around 700,000 speeds tests per day across its network to ensure demand was met. According to the operator, the additional capacity it adds to its network each year also played a key role. Other operators which have openly discussed how they are coping with traffic increases include [Vodafone](#), [Virgin Media](#), and [Verizon](#), as well as many others. COVID-19 was an unsurprising subject of much discussion at the Forum's Service Provider Action Council held prior to the Q2 meeting.

The further future-proofing of networks was among topics addressed by Broadband Forum during its Q2 meeting, taking place from Monday, June 15 to Thursday, June 25. Initiatives progressed include 5G Fixed Mobile Convergence, the User Services Platform (USP) Certification Program, and SDN management and control interfaces for Cloud CO network functions. A project which will develop specifications for a Performance Test Plan for G.hn in Access Scenarios was also started.

During the opening plenary of the meeting, a one-time Special Recognition award was presented to the Forum's Marketing and BAsE Chair Bernd Hesse, of [Calix](#), for his introduction and establishment of the Broadband Forum Marketing Councils and [Broadband Acceleration Seminar \(BAsE\) events program](#). The seminars are now established as among the most

important broadband events worldwide, with webinars taking the place of physical events so far this year.

“I would like to say thank you to the Board of Directors for this award; I’m honored to work with such a great team of professionals here at Broadband Forum,” said Hesse. “Since its launch, the BAsE series has continued to grow and generate a lot of buzz within the industry, showing the importance of such an industry event. The program keeps the broadband industry informed and inspired, while the Marketing Councils ensure that Broadband Forum’s work remains relevant and at the cutting-edge. It is an honor to receive this award which very much reflects the work of the councils and entire Broadband Forum team.”

For more information about Broadband Forum and its ongoing work visit: <https://www.broadband-forum.org/>

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About the Broadband Forum

Broadband Forum is the communications industry’s leading open standards development organization focused on accelerating broadband innovation, standards, and ecosystem development. Our members’ passion – delivering on the promise of broadband by enabling smarter and faster broadband networks and a thriving broadband ecosystem.

Broadband Forum is an open, non-profit industry organization composed of the industry’s leading broadband operators, vendors, thought leaders who are shaping the future of broadband, and observers who closely track our progress. Its work to date has been the foundation for broadband’s global proliferation and innovation. For example, the Forum’s flagship TR-069 CPE WAN Management Protocol has nearly 1 billion installations worldwide.

Broadband Forum’s projects span across 5G, Connected Home, Cloud, and Access. Its working groups collaborate to define best practices for global networks, enable new revenue-generating service and content delivery, establish technology migration strategies, and engineer critical device, service & development management tools in the home and business IP networking infrastructure. We develop multi-service broadband packet networking specifications addressing architecture, device and service management, software data models, interoperability and certification in the broadband market.

Our free technical reports and white papers can be found at <https://www.broadband-forum.org/>.

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