



Broadband Forum CEO on 5G: “What’s fixed got to do with it?”

New Forum work addresses critical 5G industry issues

Barcelona, Spain – February 27, 2018: The 28 billion devices expected to be connected to 5G will never achieve full functionality through wireless networks alone and must be backed by a world-class fixed network, according to [Broadband Forum](#) CEO Robin Mersh.

Speaking during Mobile World Congress 2018, Mersh warned that the transport network is in danger of being overlooked, with industry talk and innovation currently focusing on radio capabilities and the services 5G could realize.

“So, to answer the question: what’s fixed got to do with 5G? The answer is: everything! At some point, the radio ends and the network begins and it is at this juncture that all of 5G’s advantages – including increased capacity, higher performance and improved speeds – must be maintained by that infrastructure,” said Mersh. “It is the transport that enables this. To deliver on the promise of 5G and meet consumer expectations, convergence between fixed and mobile networks is a must. This is why [the Forum’s new work on both 5G wireless-wireline convergence and 5G transport](#) is an important contribution to 5G’s success.”

Mersh highlighted how IHS Markit’s recent findings predict there will be [28 billion connected devices and six billion smartphones using 5G by 2021](#) – which he said will require a massive scaling of the transport network.

Standardization, he said, will enable the growth required, with capacity, performance, reliability, scalability and security being key areas that the Broadband Forum is currently focusing on.

“In addition, enhanced resiliency, advanced routing techniques and time synchronization to the mobile RAN and core network is important to enable new and advanced services,” added Mersh.

The Forum is building momentum for a co-existent strategy, addressing transport network enhancements to support 5G, Wi-Fi as last mile for broadband access, small cells, hybrid access (dual access), functions between wired and wireless networks that may be instantiated as a common element, wireline and wireless network interworking and convergence at the transport, service and customer levels.

These projects reinforce the Forum’s commitment to developing technical specifications addressing the fixed broadband system evolution required for 5G, while considering migration and operational integration. This is being done in close cooperation with 3GPP and other select global organizations.

In December, the Forum also announced it is working on a landmark project with NTT to standardize the virtualization of operators’ PON networks to support the delivery of Time Critical Applications, such as some types of 5G fronthaul.

For more information about the Broadband Forum’s work on 5G, visit: <https://www.broadband-forum.org/5g>.

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About the Broadband Forum

Broadband Forum, a non-profit industry organization, is focused on engineering smarter and faster broadband networks. Our work defines best practices for global networks, enables service and content delivery, establishes technology migration strategies, engineers critical device & service management tools, and is key to redefining broadband. Our free technical reports and white papers can be found at broadband-forum.org. Twitter @Broadband_Forum.

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