



Case
Communications
March 2010
Newsletter

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Welcome

Welcome to the Case Communications March 2010 newsletter.

Cisco decides to leave Wimax market

Cisco Systems has made the decision to discontinue designing and building new WiMAX base stations and modems. It plans to focus on delivering core network and IP products. This refocusing of business direction is not a surprise. Indeed, it was more surprising when Cisco decided to enter the wireless access business in 2007

[\[More\]](#)

IT skills for 2010

After a year of hiring freezes and layoffs, IT professionals in 2010 will face a challenging employment market and the search for IT talent will grow beyond in-demand high-tech skills to also include industry-specific business savvy.

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Broxbourne Council provides Golf club with 40Mbps Internet Access

Case Communications are pleased to announce they have recently installed a 40Mbps WiMax link to the Cheshunt Golf club. While there is nothing unusual in providing a WiMax link, in this particular instance the Wireless equipment has been concealed inside a 'clock-Tower' and operates through slots in the towers brickwork to the outside world

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A man has been charged over an alleged attempt to hack into a website set up to raise funds after the Asian tsunami

Daniel Cuthbert, 28, of Whitechapel, east London, has been charged with one offence under the Computer Misuse Act. Scotland Yard said the charge followed an alleged unauthorised access of the Disasters and Emergency Committee site on New Year's Eve. Mr Cuthbert is due to appear at Horseferry Magistrates' Court next Thursday. The disaster fund has raised an estimated £250m to help victims of the tsunami. Tens of thousands of people used its web pages to offer money to those caught in the Boxing Day tragedy.

Today, Daniel Cuthbert was found guilty.

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Ex-BT man tapped private numbers to call adult lines

A former BT employee has been given a two-year community order after tapping into villagers' private phone lines to call adult chat services

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Budget 2010: Darling puts emphasis on broadband for all

Chancellor Alistair Darling reiterated the government's commitment to making Britain a digital world leader, with plans for a major broadband roll out.

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Case Communications secure contract with Serbian Air Traffic Control

Case Communications are pleased to announce they have recently won a contract with Serbia and Montenegro Air Traffic Services.

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Govt departments reaffirm cuts utilising IT

Departments across government have promised to deliver a large proportion of savings through a more cost-effective use of IT.

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Why Mobile Network Operators should follow Orange's lead in HD voice

There is currently a lot of hype in the market about high-definition (HD) voice services. Although some vendors are overstating the potential revenue opportunity, we believe that there are good business reasons why mobile operators should deploy HD voice in their networks.

[\[More\]](#)

Superfast Broadband is becoming Britain's election battleground

Two visions of broadband Britain have been sketched by Labour and Conservatives as part of their pre-election campaign skirmishing. But as well as providing an opportunity for political point scoring, one of these visions is likely to end up shaping the future of UK businesses and consumers over the life of the next Parliament - for better or worse.

[\[More\]](#)



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Cisco decides to leave Wimax market

After a recent review of its WiMAX business, Cisco Systems has announced its decision to discontinue designing and building new WiMAX base stations and modems. It plans to focus on delivering core network and IP products. This refocusing of business direction is not a surprise. Indeed, it was more surprising when Cisco decided to enter the wireless access business in 2007.

Cisco's announcement has prompted three comments:

- it forms part of the consolidation of vendors in the WiMAX market that we predicted last year
- it should not affect the WiMAX deal struck between Cisco and Clearwire in May 2009
- Cisco will have gained some very important IPR from its WiMAX venture.

Cisco bought Navini Networks, a vendor of WiMAX RAN equipment, for USD330 million in October 2007. This was a surprising foray into the radio access marketplace for a vendor that has focused on core networks. Its competitor, Nortel Networks, signed an agreement with Alvarion in June 2008 to develop a range of WiMAX radio access units. Both vendors felt that the WiMAX market had potential at that time. Several more-conventional radio access vendors, including Alcatel-Lucent, Huawei and Nokia Siemens Networks, were also vying for a share of the WiMAX market, with their own access products.

When investors in Clearwire wrote off billions of dollars in August 2009, we commented that WiMAX still has a role to play and will continue, albeit mostly in developing countries. We predicted that consolidation of vendors and providers would be inevitable

because of the limited potential of these markets.¹ Much of the vendors' early interest in WiMAX has waned since their initial moves into the market. Alcatel-Lucent has downgraded the

development of its WiMAX product.² Nokia Siemens Networks has stopped developing its WiMAX product and started to resell Alvarion's BreezeMAX. Nortel withdrew from the WiMAX market six months before it went out of business. We expect further consolidation in the WiMAX market because there are still far too many vendors for a market of this size, among them: Airspan Networks, Alcatel-Lucent, Alvarion, Aperto Networks, Axxcelera Broadband Wireless, Huawei, Motorola, NEC, Nokia Siemens Networks, Proxim Wireless, Vecima Networks and ZTE.

Cisco's announcement could undermine investor confidence in Clearwire, which received a welcome boost when Cisco signed a WiMAX deal with the ISP in May 2009. However, Cisco has confirmed to us that its change of focus will not affect the deal with Clearwire. The vendor plans to withdraw only from the radio access market. It will remain in the core network business, and the Cisco/Clearwire deal was for the supply of core equipment and new devices.

Cisco will not walk away from the WiMAX market empty-handed. It

gained valuable IPR and expertise in new antenna systems, such as smart beamforming, when it acquired Navini. The vendor's wireless products, such as Wi-Fi, will continue to benefit from these assets, which form an important part of the company's wireless capability. Until now, improvements in wireless capacity have been made through engineers' and designers' efforts to squeeze more bits out of each unit of spectrum. However, they will soon have exhausted the possibilities of this approach. Advanced antenna systems will be the next major technical innovation when it comes to creating more capacity in wireless networks. Knowledge of these techniques and related IPR will prove to be very valuable to Cisco.



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IT skills for 2010

IT professionals still smarting from the pain of the economic recession inflicted in 2009 won't find immediate relief in a booming employment market for 2010, analysts say. Companies will be rebuilding IT teams, but the majority of them will return to pre-recession levels as IT executives examine different sourcing options while working to help their businesses recover from the downturn.

"Companies looking to fill internal IT roles will focus more on crucial business-facing positions. There is no longer a blurring between IT and the business; those barriers are broken down now. IT will be expected to take more of a leadership role and make decisions for the business," says Lily Mok, vice president of Gartner's CIO Research. "IT needs to look for opportunities to really help the business transition from recession to recovery. IT needs to do more than support the business now; it needs to prepare an organization to return to growth and show how technology can be used to help the business .

That means managers and recruiters are on the lookout for IT pros with vertical-industry knowledge in areas such as healthcare, insurance and government, as well as experience with business process re-engineering. Yet technology-specific skills around emerging areas such as cloud computing and software-as-a-service will drive the need for savvy vendor management approaches, while 'security, virtualisation and data center technical know-how will continue to be sought after among the pool of available IT pros.

"Data shows that the combination of deep technical IT skills with project management or leadership experience, as well as looking at the intersection of IT and risk management for the business, are the areas in highest demand," says Jeff Schwartz, principal of human capital at Deloitte Consulting.

Know your vertical

The stereotype of IT existing in the back office and not facing the business is gone. In years past, industry watchers have advised high-tech workers to better communicate with the business, but now the task is to become a critical player in the success of the business – and not only by taking direction. IT professionals will be expected to take a leadership role in 2010 and take initiative in making decisions in the best interests of the business.

"Even with all the new technologies going on, the job market for IT pros is about the application of the technologies to the business. The skills required going forward will be multi-faceted in ways they haven't been in the past. Technology workers need to understand the business and provide a diverse set of technical skills to become the go-to person to deliver the right technology for the business," says Rich Milgram, CEO of recruiting and strategic staffing provider Beyond.com.

Some vertical industries in particular will see a huge spike in demand for high-tech workers. For instance, healthcare is

expected to see demand for 70,000 new IT positions in the next 12 months, according to the Computing Technology Industry Association. The increase in open jobs is due in part to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, which includes billions in provisions for healthcare IT. The expected uptick in demand is driving industry organizations such as CompTIA to find the best ways to educate and train IT workers on healthcare-specific skills.

"We are working now to determine what kind of IT roles should be supported in certifications from CompTIA," says Terry Erdle, senior vice president of skills certifications at CompTIA.

Also associated with economic stimulus plans, insurance companies and government agencies will experience a significant increase in demand for high-tech talent.

"There is little question that the healthcare sector, regardless of what the outcome of healthcare reform will be, is going to continue growing. From an industry perspective, healthcare is at the top of the list followed by government agencies in terms of demand," Deloitte's Schwartz says.

This sharpened focus on business knowledge will also drive demand in IT governance, business processes engineering, project management and architect positions, high-tech talent experts report.

"The skills within IT that are process-centric are clearly more in demand today," says Sean Ebner, regional vice president of Technisource. "The blurring of lines between business process engineers and technology engineers has happened and companies want to hire candidates that will be able to apply governance, to implement and modify systems in a more cost-efficient manner using process engineering and knowledge automation."

Understanding the business, being able to re-engineer processes in such a way to streamline operations and optimizing IT projects will be top of mind for many hiring managers, IT industry watchers agree.

"Those coming from the business side or being very well versed in the business processes are in good positions," Gartner's Mok says. "Combining the knowledge of the technical systems with business processes will help IT professionals get and keep key positions."

Secure next-generation nets

It's no surprise with multiplying headlines around data leaks and cybercrime that security skills remain sought after, even in a down employment market. Yet the type of security professional in demand ranges from technical skills acquired via certifications to executive-level risk managers, analysts say.

"Security continues to be in demand, in both operational and strategic positions. Information risk management is seeing growth as well as those positions that require a tactical technical focus," says David Foote, co-founder, CEO and chief research officer at Foote Partners.

Foote Partners data shows that while many certified and noncertified skills experienced pay decreases throughout the recession, IT professionals with security certification on average experienced a nearly 2% pay increase through the third quarter of 2009. Over the past two years, IT security certifications overall saw average premium pay increase by more than 3.6%, trailing only architecture/project management certifications, which

experienced a 5% compensation increase in the same timeframe.

"If you know how to keep your company's data secure, you were in demand yesterday, are in demand today and will be in demand tomorrow," says Tom Silver, senior vice president with Dice.com.

CompTIA in late 2009 polled some 1,537 high-tech workers and found 37% intend to pursue a security certification over the next five years. Separately, nearly 20% indicated they would seek ethical hacking certification over the same time period. And another 13% pinpointed forensics as the next certification goal in their career development.

"When you add the results, you will see that about two-thirds of IT workers intend to add some type of security certification to their portfolio," says Terry Erdle, senior vice president of skills certifications. "This trend is driven by two factors: one, security issues are pervasive, and two, more and more people are moving to managed services and software-as-a-service models, which involves more complex networking. That level of non-enterprise data center computing has people look more closely at their security infrastructure."

Acquire open source skills

Open source software is gaining steam among enterprise companies that find the flexibility and low cost appealing and now can pick and choose among commercial support packages. Certified skills and experience in the realm of open source packages are already on recruiters' radar, according to IT talent experts, who report that companies in 2010 will seek candidates with open source skills.

"We are seeing a ton of demand for skills around open source technologies and frameworks. Demand for 'Python', 'Ruby on Rails' and 'PHP' development skills far exceeds the number of people available with skills," says Michael Kirven, co-founder and principal of IT resourcing firm Bluewolf.

An online job resource for technology professionals, (Dice.com), also reports seeing increased interest in open source skill sets. Silver says the Web site has seen a growth in interest around programming skills such as Ruby on Rails and Python as well.

"There are about 1,000 jobs open looking for such skills and we expect open source technologies are an area employers will be looking to hire," he says.

Yet keep in mind the interest in these technologies is at an enterprise level, from employers looking to hire IT professionals that can help them run data centers more efficiently and cost-effectively.

"Hiring managers want to see more than people playing around with 'Open Source' in a sandbox environment. People that get trained and certified on these open source technologies will stand out when their resumes fall on recruiters' desks," Kirven adds.

Understand the hype

Emerging technologies, perhaps shrouded in a bit of hype, have garnered attention from hiring managers as well. With vendors touting cloud computer, software-as-a-service (SaaS) applications and social networking tools as a productivity, operations and economic problem solvers, enterprise IT leaders will want staff who can navigate through the fluff and find the substance in such offerings.

Gartner recognized cloud computing, mobility, social networking and virtualization as top technologies for 2010 and in turn, that means hiring managers will be seeking skills in those same areas, according to Mok. That is one reason the research firm identified Java, .Net and other Web development technologies as a sought after skill set.

"The demand for such skills is not about the amount of available IT pros that know Java, it is more with the quality of the skill sets people have in those areas," Mok explains. "The future is the Web via social computing and those are just extensions of a variety of multimedia and Web skills. It is directly related to how businesses can use the Internet to better connect with customers."

While Web development skills aren't new, cloud computing, for instance, is being presented as a new technology, though many would argue it is based on previous models for delivering technology. Still such confusion around cloud services could be quickly cleared up but a high-tech worker well-versed in the market who knows what moves might best benefit the company. Such knowledge is going to get IT leaders' attention, IT talent experts say.

"Anyone looking for work in the IT space should be well-versed in what cloud means to the company they want to work for. It means many different things, everyone is throwing cloud into their product pitches," Bluewolf's Kirven says. "Hiring managers want to see people that have done cloud before and understand how it can be used and how it can turn into a disaster. They want the best possible talent in house to try to drive these new initiatives."

Vendors such as IBM are even getting in on the 'Cloud' skills action. The company in fall 2009 launched its IBM Cloud Academy, which it describes as a "global forum for educators, researchers and IT personnel from the education industry to pursue cloud computing initiatives, develop skills and share best practices for reducing operating costs while improving quality and access to education." CompTIA also in the fall of 2009 acquired MSP partners, which Erdle says, is helping the industry organization "baseline requirements for a set of certifications around managed services, SaaS, cloud and virtual skills."

"We get several calls per week around SaaS, cloud and virtual skills that companies want guidance on considering we are the vendor-neutral party," Erdle explains. "CompTIA is working now on building certifications programs to release in 2010 and get in front of this growing demand."

Deliver advanced data centers

In the wake of the recession, companies won't abandon the lessons learned from over-provisioning or spending needlessly on excess infrastructure resources, for instance. Designing and delivering cost-efficient, consolidated data centers will top the list of many IT leaders and finding employees experienced in the areas of virtualization energy-efficient computing will be critical to their success during the economic recovery.

"There is huge demand right now for a lot of the skills around data center moves and consolidations. There are skills lacking in virtualization technologies and even network technology that they need to understand to support next-generation data centers," Bluewolf's Kirven says. "Add data center security and disaster recovery skills to that list and the ideal candidate would need to be very well versed in the many technologies that make up data centers of the future."

As companies continue to invest in virtualization, the demand for IT professionals experience in designing virtual data centers will also grow. According to Foote Partners, virtualization continues to

land on the research firm's hot list of technologies and related skills.

"There has been a lot of spending around virtualization skills already," Foote says.

Companies today are seeking talent in virtualization and employment watchers expect the existing numbers to only continue to grow.

"We have more than 1,000 jobs on the site right now that call for understanding virtualization and how that technology can be applied to a company's infrastructure," Dice.com's Silver adds, "If you have experience in virtualization, if you essentially know how you can help your company's data center run more efficiently, then you are already in demand."

Looking ahead

Industry watchers report IT staffs could remain lean in the coming months and that economic recovery might not indicate a full job recovery to pre-recession numbers. That doesn't mean there isn't opportunity for IT professionals to expand their careers and take advantage of the opportunity to become a critical part of their company's business in the long-term, according to Gartner's Mok

"IT departments during the downturn were very cautious about where they reduced and more organizations plan to keep staffing levels flat for a period of time. As the recovery continues, they might not even add too much, so I don't think we will ever go back to the big IT departments of 2000 or 2001," she says. "But companies realize today that these business-savvy technology skill sets take time to develop and they are doing a better job of workforce planning and training staff on the technologies they feel their business will need in the future."

Some IT watchers argue that high-tech remains a successful career option for many. The fact that many jobs remained open during the recession points to a continued need for high-tech talent, and job seekers should consider this a positive sign going forward, researching in what vertical market the skills they possess are most in demand.

"We've seen throughout the recession the interesting phenomenon of unfilled jobs even though people are actively looking for work. That is just one measure of the skills gap," Deloitte's Schwartz says. "The job market is different than in boom time, and the problem remains to be about matching available skills to open positions."

And while some say the future for IT professionals continues to look promising, they are quick to point out that it also looks very different from the past.

"Market influences such as Outsourcing and budget strain is forcing clarity on how money is spent on high-tech talent," says Adam Lawrence, vice president of service delivery at Yoh Talent Solutions. "Ultimately it comes down to the worker to move up the value chain from being a great coder to becoming an architect savvy in the business, for instance. Technology workers must know how the business is intricately underpinned with technology and use their technical talent toward making the business a bigger success."

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Broxbourne Council provides golf club with 40Mbps Internet access

Broxbourne Council is situated in the leafy suburbs of rural Hertfordshire. The main Council offices are based in the town of Cheshunt, which supports a thriving urban community. The Council has a number of remote sites, such as Civic Halls, Sports Centres and One-Stop shops, at various locations across the county.

Mr. Matthew Hamilton, the IT Manager at Broxbourne Council, contacted Case Communications informing them that the Council had a requirement to connect all of its outlying sites to the central Council office network and internet. He wanted to discuss the most effective ways, both in terms of cost and reliability, of establishing these links. The first two sites to be evaluated were from the Council's HQ to the Civic Centre and from HQ to the Cheshunt Golf Club. Case Communications looked at four options - Ethernet First Mile, Local Loop Unbundling, Fibre Optic and Wireless. Following discussions with Mr. Hamilton, it was decided that Wireless offered the best solution, meeting the Council's requirement in terms of a reasonable capital cost, low operational cost and the ability to operate from 40Mbps to 300Mbps.

The Civic Centre was some sixteen miles from Broxbourne HQ and Case Communications tested the proposed wireless link between the listed Clock Tower at HQ and the roof at the Civic Hall. Results showed that a data rate of 15Mbps was achieved. However, the trial was undertaken during the winter months, when the trees were bare and foliage at a minimum. With a change of season and the appearance of leaves, there was the possibility that the extra greenery could cause interference, possibly leading to a reduction in the data rate and an unacceptable level of reliability. The whole point of running a test is to gather the information necessary to enable prospective users to make an informed decision about which type of solution best suits their needs. Case Communications are experienced suppliers and installers of wireless systems and in their opinion there was a potential question mark over the effectiveness of wireless in this location. Therefore, they recommended the Council use fibre for this particular connection. The second of the initial links to be evaluated, between HQ and the Golf Club, proved to be a textbook case for the use of wireless. When tested, a 40Mbps Wimax system produced a full 40Mbps. However, the Council planning committee had reservations about allowing any external objects to be attached to the Clock Tower at HQ. Although it was possible to camouflage the antennae, the installation was subject to permission being granted by the committee for the necessary hardware to be mounted on the listed Clock Tower building.

During the time taken by the planning committee to make their decision, Case Communication undertook a test with the antennae located inside the Clock Tower at HQ. Even from inside the tower, a full 40Mbps using a 40Mbps system was still achieved. Now it had been established that the antennae would be invisible to the naked eye, Case Communications were given permission to install the system inside the Clock Tower. The Golf Club was the first of the remote sites to be connected to HQ. Others would follow, and in order to make it easier to install additional WiMax systems

throughout the Borough, Case Communications' engineers also installed a Case Rugged switch and fibre cable from the top of the Clock Tower to the Council's Computer Room. This link runs at 1.25Gbps and provides a concentration point for future wireless systems to other locations. The Wireless Systems and Case Communications' Rugged switches are managed via SNMP, allowing any alarms, events or activities to be sent to an SNMP management system, such as the CaseView Manager. The Golf Club is now an integral part of Broxbourne Council's IT system and the club members have 40Mbps internet access. This can be upgraded to 300 Mbps by use of software keys should more bandwidth be required in the future.

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A man has been charged over an alleged attempt to hack into a website set up to raise funds after the Asian tsunami

Daniel Cuthbert saw the devastating images of the Tsunami disaster and decided to donate £30 via the website that was hastily set up to be able to process payments. He is a computer security consultant, regarded in his field as an expert and respected by colleagues and employers alike. He entered his full personal details (home address, number, name and full card details). He did not receive confirmation of payment or a reference and became concerned as he has had issues with fraud on his card on a previous occasion. He then did a couple of very basic penetration tests. If they resulted in the site being insecure as he suspected, he would have contacted the authorities, as he had nothing to gain from doing this for fun and keeping the fact to himself that he suspected the site to be a phishing site and all this money pledged was going to some South American somewhere in South America.

The first test he used was the (dot dot slash, 3 times) `../..../` sequence. The `../` command is called a Directory Traversal which allows you to move up the hierarchy of a file. The triple sequence amounts to a DTA (Directory Traversal Attack), allows you to move three times. It is not a complete attack as that would require a further command, it was merely a light "knock on the door". The other test, which constituted an apostrophe(') was also used. He was then satisfied that the site was safe as his received no error messages in response to his query, then went about his work duties. There were no warnings or dialogue boxes showing that he had accessed an unauthorised area.

20 days later he was arrested at his place of work and had his house searched. In the first part of his interview, he did not readily acknowledge his actions, but in the second half of the interview, he did. He was a little distraught and confused upon arrest, as anyone would be in that situation and did not ask for a solicitor, as he maintained he did nothing wrong. His tests were done in a 2 minute timeframe, then forgotten about.

He was prosecuted under the Computer Misuse Act 1990, which was signed in 1989 when perms were just going out of fashion and mobile phones were like bricks and cost £1000 and we were still using green type on a black background. The word "Computer" was not even defined as they realised that this area was moving at light speed so they wanted to keep it open. Sadly, it has become open to willy-nilly interpretation and the magistrate decided there was intention to access data as stated in section 1(a), although I may be biased, it is an incorrect interpretation.

Cuthbert was prosecuted under the [Computer Misuse Act 1990](#), and convicted under Section 1 (a) of this Act. The relevant section of the Act is:

[Section \(1\)](#) of the Act states:

(1) A person is guilty of an offence if –

- a. he causes a computer to perform any function with intent to secure access to any program or data held in any computer;
- b. the access he intends to secure is unauthorised; and
- c. he knows at the time when he causes the computer to perform the function that that is the case.

As an expert, if he had true intent (as the judge deemed he did, which is an incorrect analysis) he would have been more than capable of "hacking" and gunning that door down with a digital version of a point-blank range AK47, but he did not. He maybe should not have done the tests that are beyond the knowledge of a regular user and a caution would have sufficed, there was no need for a trial and certainly not 10 months of waiting time. The policeman was smug as he got his brown points and the CPS prosecutor was what one can expect of a CPS prosecutor, patronising, pedantic and uninteresting but sadly successful.

The ../ sequence triggered of the alarm which was set up as "high" for this sort of "attack" at the donate.bt.com website that was set up by the DEC website. This alerted someone that there was something potentially suspicious, this was then passed up to someone who reported it to the police. They found their suspect through the IP address and were able to trace it to his laptop. Well, the Computer Crime Unit (known in the industry as "Muppets") were very happy they got their man.

Mr Cuthbert was convicted under S. 1 (a) of the Computer Misuse Act 1990. It will be almost impossible for him to work in IT, the security industry being totally based on trust and reputation, as they are all freelancers and rely on contacts. That simply is not right. Justice is not always synonymous with legality.

When someone tells you, "whatever you do, do not press the red button" and you are almost compelled, in just that way, I am feverishly tempted to type in the ../ sequence in the Ministry of Defence website, and see what happens. Maybe not.



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Ex-BT man tapped private numbers to call adult lines

Peter Creese, 44, from Countesthorpe, Leicestershire, was ordered to do 180 hours unpaid community work.

Villagers in Willoughby Waterleys, near Countesthorpe, realised many of them were being billed for calls to premium rate lines they had not made.

Leicester Crown court heard he had been sacked from BT for the same activity.

In mitigation, the court heard Creese acted on compulsion.

A police and BT investigation was started at the end of 2008 when the offences came to light.

Creese, of Maurice Drive, had been going to a BT junction box on a crossroads near the village and using equipment to tap the phones of random households.

He then rang the adult lines resulting in nearly £1,000 of calls between 2006 and 2009.

He was caught after BT installed a hidden CCTV camera inside the box which captured him tapping the phone lines.

Recorder David Hall said he had narrowly avoided going to prison but must repay the money to his victims who were still out of pocket.

'Dark secret'

Mitigating, Philip Gibbs said: "This is about compulsion, inevitably he was going to be caught.

"He didn't even notice the CCTV equipment in the box.

"He is a decent, supportive, kind, caring, family man. It's his dark secret and escapism from difficult family circumstances."

The defendant now faces disciplinary action by his current employer Eon.

Creese admitted dishonestly obtaining electronic communication services between 2006 and 2009 to make calls to premium rate numbers within intent to avoid payment.

He also admitted possessing apparatus to obtain electronic communication services namely wires, cables, crocodile clip and screwdrivers.



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Budget 2010: Darling puts emphasis on broadband for all

He announced super-fast broadband for 90% of homes by 2017, funded by a £6 annual tax on landline phones.

The Conservatives have vowed to scrap the tax if they win the next election.

Fast net services will create "hundreds of thousands" of new jobs while putting services online will lower the cost of public spending, the chancellor said.

He also promised more tax breaks for the UK's computer games industry.

"The UK has the potential to be a digital world leader. It needs high-speed broadband for rural areas as well as urban, it must not be limited to the well-off," the chancellor said in his budget speech.

The broadband tax has proved controversial. The proposal is to charge people with fixed lines 50p a month to help fund super-fast broadband, although it is not clear if those who use cable services will be included.

It has been branded unfair by an all-party group of MPs who say that most people who pay it won't reap the benefits.

It is aimed at the so-called final third of the country that is unlikely to be included in commercial plans to roll out expensive fibre optic services.

Some experts were surprised that the chancellor did not reiterate Gordon Brown's commitment to bring super-fast broadband to 100% of the UK by 2020.

"We are disappointed that the budget has simply repeated the government's previous target of 90% coverage by 2017," said Sebastien Lahtinen, co-founder of broadband site ThinkBroadband.

Election issue

In a speech made earlier this week, Mr Brown signalled how seriously the government is talking its digital commitments when he described high-speed web access as "the electricity of the digital age".

Broadband is increasingly becoming a hot election issue with some key differences between the parties.

The Conservatives believe that government intervention to ensure super-fast broadband reaches the whole country is not yet necessary.

It favours leaving the roll out of such services to the industry, although it would consider government assistance in 2012, when

funds are freed up by the digital switchover.

The broadband tax is one of the measures in the government's Digital Economy Bill.

The bill has attracted controversy and some of those opposed will gather in front of parliament on Wednesday evening to protest against government plans to allow web blocking and to cut illegal file-sharers off from the net.

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Case Communications secure contract with Serbian Air Traffic Control

The contract with Serbia and Montenegro Air Services is an extension to a contract previously secured by Case Communications in 2005, for providing mission critical communications equipment to the service.



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Government departments reaffirm cuts utilising IT

In the Budget, the government committed itself to making £11bn of savings a year by 2012/13 from efficiency and streamlining the centre of government.

The police will be one of the biggest savers, promising £346m in savings from procurement, IT and business support functions already announced in the Policing White Paper.

Its lead department, the Home Office, has also committed itself to saving £80m by reducing its IT spend by 20 per cent. £40m will come from the renegotiation of existing contracts for basic IT services.

The Ministry of Defence has said it will make £130m of savings through the replacement of legacy IT systems.

An identical amount will be saved across the Communities and Local Government department's group of organisations through back office, procurement and using shared services.

The Department for International Development has committed to £150m in savings by streamlining back-office processes and using shared services with other overseas departments, and halving the amount spent on IT consultancy as in-house skills have been sufficiently boosted recently.

The government's main IT department, the Department for Work and Pensions, will save £180m through getting better value out of major contracts, including IT.

As part of the NHS's National Programme for IT's plan to save £600m, which was announced in December 2009, £100m will be saved by giving local hospitals a greater choice.

Defra said it will save £100m in ICT, finance, HR and procurement costs by stopping "low priority activities" such as some IT projects. About 85 per cent of these savings will be made by its arms length bodies, meaning the troubled Rural Payments Agency will be expected to make some tough decisions.

The Nuclear Decommissioning Authority, part of the Department of Energy and Climate Change, said will it save around £30m by, among other things, rationalising the provision of IT.

Finally the Department for Culture, Media and Sport said it will save £35m by meeting savings targets on back office spending as announced in the Smarter Government strategy.

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Why Mobile Network Operators should follow Orange's lead in HD voice

Orange has been the most vocal champion of HD voice in the operator community – it is rolling out services in all its European markets in 2010 – but other operators are expected to follow. The service is relatively easy to implement and offers operators a way to differentiate in an increasingly challenging marketplace.

The technology has been available for some time – the AMR-WB codec was first standardised in 2001 – which begs the question why it has taken so long for a commercial service to be launched. Several obstacles have hindered the commercial deployment of HD, including the lack of a clear revenue opportunity and the need for codec support in a wide range of handsets. These obstacles remain, the three factors that have tipped the balance are.

- **Operators need to drive up voice usage, while increasing the perceived value of the service.** Growth in mobile voice usage has historically been driven by latent demand for voice services that was realised by mobility. People were prepared to pay a premium to make calls on the move and, as prices decreased, they made more calls. Voice quality was of little importance, compared with the convenience of mobile services. Now that mobile markets are saturating, there are few opportunities for growth in mobile voice. MNOs are looking for ways to sustain its value, which still accounts for 75% of their revenue. The average retail revenue per mobile minute in Western Europe is forecast to fall from EUR0.13 in 2009 to EUR0.09 in 2014. Collectively, MNOs need to keep this figure as high as possible, while encouraging greater usage. HD voice offers a potential means to drive up usage and to maintain the perceived value of voice services.
- **HD voice can support migration of traffic to 3G networks.** It is relatively easy to implement HD voice on 3G networks and this has minimal impact on network dimensioning – the AMR-WB codec has a standard bitrate of 12.65kbit/s, compared with the 12.2kbit/s used by the standard mobile voice codec (AMR). Although AMR-WB can be implemented on 2G networks, it is a better fit with 3G and could be used to help to migrate voice traffic away from congested GSM networks.
- **HD handsets are on their way.** Vendor support is critical to the success of HD voice services. A wide range of HD-capable handsets needs to be available to support service adoption. Because of the service's reliance upon the 'network effect' (in other words, the more people who use it, the more valuable it becomes), rapid penetration of the customer base is desirable and necessary. This will not happen unless the right handsets are available. HD-enabled handsets have already been released by Nokia, Sony Ericsson, HTC and RIM, but more will be necessary in order to support operators' ambitions for the service. Orange appears to be confident that this support will be

forthcoming: it is claiming that its entire handset portfolio will support HD by the end of 2011.

There remain plenty of obstacles to the success of HD voice – a failure either to interconnect HD voice 'islands' or to equip mobile handsets with high-quality acoustics could undermine the user experience.

As well as supporting the positive perception of network quality, HD will also help to maintain value in a sector in decline. Operators are not expected to charge for the service explicitly, but HD voice will help to slow price erosion in a core market and will help operators to differentiate their services against over-the-top players.



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Superfast broadband is becoming Britain's election battleground

The next-gen broadband political battleground can be summed up as follows: universality versus speed.

In the red corner is Prime Minister Gordon Brown, waving his government's *Digital Britain* report and promising next-gen broadband for all.

The PM has pledged to ensure 'Superfast' broadband access reaches every home in the UK- whether it's in Orpington or Orkney. Brown's ubiquitous superfast future will apparently be funded by a 50p per month tax on telephone lines slated to raise £1bn by 2017 - but we don't know how long we have to wait to get the promised "100 per cent access in all UK homes".

Nor will the government be pinned to the ropes on speed. It talks only of 'next generation' and 'superfast' - admitting this might mean speeds of 50Mbps, or even 20Mbps, depending on where the user lives and how their next-gen broadband is being delivered. Both wired and wireless technologies are part of this access plan.

In the blue corner is David Cameron. The Conservative party leader is aiming high in the speed stakes: He wants to bring 100Mbps broadband to the 'majority of homes' - though there's no word on how big this majority will be (51 per cent to 99 per cent makes for a lot of wiggle room).

How will Cameron get 100Mbps to a majority? His mantra is market-first: open the ducts deregulate and let the market do the leg work. If this doesn't kick-start a fibre arms race - and analysts are doubtful - Cameron has a contingency plan: he'll slice out a chunk of the BBC's licence fee, post-digital switchover, to fund next-gen expansion.

So ultimately the Tories' plan is remarkably similar to the government's - albeit avoiding the politically unpopular position of creating a new tax.

So there you have it - two high-tech futures asking for your votes. But which is better for the UK?.

(And before you ask, the Lib Dems' superfast broadband ambitions fall somewhere in the middle - they want 40Mbps for the "vast majority" of the country by 2017).

You could argue that neither is good enough - that both lack the ambition required to push the UK into the fast lane on the global superhighway with countries such as Japan and South Korea. But short of enlisting every Facebook user in the UK to a 'Broadband Big Ambition' campaign - and getting the politicians running scared - calls for 1Gbps plus broadband are likely to be ignored - for now at least.

So of the two main options on the table, which is best: speed or ubiquity?

There's no doubt 100Mbps is an instant attention grabber. After all broadband speed is something of a national obsession in the UK. According to Ofcom CEO Ed Richards, the telecoms and media regulator's most downloaded piece of research is not, as you might expect, anything to do with *Big Brother* - but a report investigating the real-world speeds broadband users are getting, rather than the headline speeds their service is marketed as offering.

But the popularity of that report also indicates that Brits are keen to have their feet on the ground when it comes to broadband. They want to know what they're actually getting, not a theoretical maximum that someone somewhere might be enjoying. The Conservative Party's tech manifesto offers a similar headline pledge - 100Mbps - but there's a less flashy reality the Tories aren't shouting about: their tech plans could leave an unsung minority of the country trailing - perhaps indefinitely.