

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN A FAST-EVOLVING MARKET

Dr. Rolf Nafziger, Senior Vice President International Wholesale Business Unit (IBU) at Deutsche Telekom (DT), talks to Capacity about a telecoms market in a dynamic state of transformation and innovation.

Q Traditional business models are becoming obsolete as the telecoms market undergoes rapid transformation. Can you tell us a little about DT's plans to meet these challenges?

I believe that innovation is key, and that is also exactly what Deutsche Telekom stands for. We're actively breaking new ground in several important areas. On the one hand, there is immense work on 5G where we are taking a leading position. We are also driving the European Aviation Network (EAN) project, a unique integrated system that brings together S-Band satellite connectivity with a complementary ground network for the benefit of air passengers in Europe. In an industry where security threats are constantly growing with no end in sight, every communications network is vulnerable. That's why security is one of our most central concerns and why we've established a wide variety of initiatives to help combat cyber criminality and protect the valuable assets of our global customers.

Q 5G was a hot topic at this year's Mobile World Congress, where do you see 5G taking the industry?

The first thing to realise is that 5G is about a lot more than just speed. It will deliver the low latency needed for industrial Internet applications. It will also clearly do a lot to foster the growth of the IoT market, which is in a state of rapid expansion. We are already hard at work on the development of important new applications where 5G will be crucial, in fields such as augmented reality and cloud robotics.

While 5G is an essential enabler for IoT service models, wholesale will play an important role in providing connectivity for IoT service providers around the globe at high quality and over secure networks. That's exactly where we can leverage the strength of Deutsche Telekom's IBU.

Q Please tell us more about the current status of the EAN project. When can European airline passengers begin to expect stable, high-speed in-air connectivity?

We are definitely innovators in this field, and are truly transforming air travel. Together with our partner Inmarsat, a leader in global satellite communication, we will soon provide high capacity, low-latency connectivity across the skies of Europe. We've successfully conducted test flights, and roll-out is currently in progress at full speed with live over-the-air connectivity already achieved in many countries. For this initiative, International Airlines Group (IAG) has signed a contract as our launch customer. They plan to have 90% of their short haul fleet fully equipped by early 2019.

Q Consumers are quickly adapting to new and exciting forms of communication technology, for example IoT which as you say is already a high-growth market. Do you think, in this rush to innovate, there has been enough focus placed on security?

We take security very seriously, and are conscious that it is top of the list of the needs and concerns of our customers. Following what happened to the DT network at the end of last year, it is clearer than ever that security is paramount. Cyber criminals tried to hijack the CPEs of our customers so they could harvest them for subsequent use in a botnet. A large number of routers and access lines were affected. But I am pleased to say that Deutsche Telekom was well prepared and successfully managed the problem within 24 hours.

However, the incident raises the important point that even though we are well prepared, we were still attacked. It shows that you can never take too many steps to protect yourself, and that the industry must work together to face the problem. We at IBU must play our part at the wholesale level – that is the reason why



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we have developed our innovative 360° defence strategy, which we are launching at this year's ITW in Chicago.

Our 360° solutions offer protection against volume-based, application layer and multi-vector DDoS attacks. With cloud-based defense mechanisms, we can offer over 2Tbps of mitigation capacity to our customers. Just recently we introduced our SS7 Firewall which is a welcome addition to our solutions in the area of signaling fraud. All our products, throughout our portfolio, are either secure by definition or delivered as a set of dedicated security solutions so that our customers can cope with the same sort of threats we and other carriers are facing. ■