

OSS NewsWatch

by Alana Grelyak

With all the buzz about the launch of the new iPhone, it isn't any wonder that it makes a hefty appearance in this month's column. However, there is also plenty of info on the mergers, new hires, and press releases that we're sure you look forward to seeing each month. Here's your Newswatch column for August.

The Apple iPhone made its United States release on June 29th with sales of over 500,000 units in its first weekend. Apple's stock has gone up about 30% since it announced the phone's existence in January of this year. USA Today's recent poll of iPhone buyers concludes that, overall, the buyers are very satisfied with the iPhone, which combines a web browser, cellular device, and media player. Hefty prices aside, some iPhone owners had no trouble dismantling their iPhones to see what they were made of, said the Forbes/Associated Press. Stocks for the component makers immediately increased after the findings were published. On top of taking the phones apart, Norwegian Hacker Jon Lech Jonansen has recently cracked the iPhone's activation process, thereby negating the need to have anything to do with AT&T. This could be a bad thing for Synchronoss Technologies, a company that provides on-demand transaction management software to Tier One companies, which has been awarded a multi-year contract in regards to the iPhone. The contract, which links Synchronoss with AT&T, will give Synchronoss the task of supporting the "launch and ongoing operational support of the Apple iPhone," with the goal of streamlining the activation process into a more customer-friendly task. While clearly a big hit in the U.S., Apple plans to limit the European and Asian releases of the iPhone until 2008.

In the world of mergers, AT&T has denied rumors of a possible bid on Vodafone. According to new CEO Randal Stephenson, AT&T is unlikely to make such a large European acquisition. AT&T did, however, pay \$2.8 billion in the acquisition of Dobson Communications, a rural wireless provider that has 1.7 million customers under its Cellular One brand name. The acquisition has caused stocks in several other rural wireless providers, including SunCom Wireless, Rural Cellular, and others, to rise.

Telus has been in and out of the running for a merger with Bell Canada over the last month. Initially, Telus CEO Darren Entwistle earled Canadian regulators to speed

up their review of the bid Telus made. When the reviews didn't happen as quickly as Telus would have liked, they unexpectedly pulled out of the running and decided to not make a bid for Bell Canada. While Telus was shuffling its feet, several other private-equity firms were reported to have submitted bids, as well. As of the July 1, Bell Canada agreed to a \$48.5 billion takeover by Providence Equity Partners and Madison Dearborn Partners, as well as The Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan Board. Shortly thereafter, Darren Entwistle, CEO of Telus, announced that Telus has not completely decided to forgo any further bids on Bell Canada. Analysts speculate that Telus may try to outbid the private-equity companies mentioned above.

Telefonica, a Spanish telecommunications firm, is looking to buy out sole control of Vivo, a Brazilian mobile operator, from Portugal Telecom. Telefonica has made an offer of \$4.08 billion to Portugal Telecom, which is currently a joint operator of Vivo, along with Telefonica.

Several companies have undergone changes in their staff recently. Earthlink has announced the hiring of Rolla P. Huff as its new CEO and president. Huff was formerly the Chairman and CEO of Mpower Communications.

John Garcia has moved to the marketing division of Sprint Nextel and into the position of Vice President of Product Management and Development. Garcia was previously president of Sprint's joint venture with four cable operators.

Sigma Systems has appointed Gary Gibbs as the company's new Vice President of Channel Development. Alex Salamon, Vice President of Global Sales for Sigma Systems, said, "Gary will help drive global expansion into new market verticals, diverse geographies and next-generation technologies fueled by new business, technology and delivery partnerships." Gibbs was previous the Vice President Global Channels and Alliances at Intec.

Peter Löscher has recently been hired as the new CEO of Siemens AG while the company goes through a possible restructuring and cleanup of a large-scale corporate-corruption scandal in Europe. Löscher is replacing Klaus Kleinfeld who stepped down on June 30th of this year.

Prices seem to be changing rapidly in favor of the consumer as several large wireless providers change their pricing plans. Verizon Wireless has introduced a new three level plan selection for individual subscribers and family plans. The change will let customers choose from basic, select, and premium plans.

Vodafone has cut their charges for mobile broadband access for laptop in half. The original fee of \$89 has been reduced to \$50. Vodafone has also increased the amount that subscribers are able to download and have introduced a new 24-hour access session that will cost around \$17.

AT&T is allowing its Internet subscribers to access nationwide Wi-Fi for free from one of its near 10,000 hot spots.

Frost & Sullivan, a global consulting company, has named Clarity International OSS Vendor of the Year in Asia Pacific. Clarity, the OSS industry's business process

automation company, has received the award as "part of the 2007 Frost & Sullivan Asia Pacific ICT Awards, held in Singapore to recognize outstanding performance by companies in the Asia Pacific region in the field of information and communications technology (ICT)." The award was given in part because Clarity won the largest number of OSS contracts in Asia Pacific in the last year.

Charter Communications, Inc. has selected Sigma Systems' service management platform for its "provisioning and activation, and resource management across all service domains." Charter Communications is the third largest publicly traded cable operator in the U.S. and selected the Sigma Service Platform (SMP) to "seamlessly integrate its business, operational and network management systems, and to provide end-to-end automation of residential and commercial telephone and high-speed Internet service."

In an interesting study done by Queen's University of Canada, it is reported that solar radiation may be responsible for many dropped cell phone calls. "We believe that this is caused by the Sun radiating energy into the Earth's magnetic field," said Dr. David Thomson, a professor at Queens University in Ontario. The radioactive energy from the Sun may be responsible for between 9 and 20 percent of the dropped calls. The study will be published in *Proceedings of the IEEE*, a leading journal in the field of international technology.

If you have news you'd like to share with Pipeline, contact us at editor@pipelinepub.com.