NEWSLETTER

WELCOME!!

Welcome to the first NICC Standards newsletter. In this newsletter, we intend to keep you up to date on what's been going on at NICC to remind you of the benefits of membership, and highlight any work areas where you may like to get involved. Please feel free to distribute this newsletter as you wish.

NICC Open Forum

Every year NICC holds an Open Forum, where we invite expert speakers to present on the hot topics in telecommunications. The subject matter at the 2009 Open Forum was diverse, ranging from Openreach and Vodafone's visions of high speed network access to facilitate Digital Britain, through David Hendon of BIS providing an insight into the Digital Britain legislation, and Peter Cochrane giving his inimitable view of how new technologies are changing how we live our lives. Many of the presentations are available on our website.

The date of this year's Open Forum has been set for the 30th November. If you'd like to attend and weren't on the invite list this year, contact nick.Ireland@niccstandards.org.uk

Members' Website

The private members' website is now available. We acknowledge that this is somewhat overdue, but it's been a tough task that has taken up much of Ian Spiers' time. We now have a working structure, meaning that everyone has access to the same documents, without the vagaries of whether emails get through.

The private website has a calendar of all NICC working group meetings, and the facility for each meeting to have its own workspace for documents. We're also working on porting over all the historic documents from the Ofcom website, and also facilities that were provided by Vodafone at one stage. If you would like access and haven't yet got it, you should contact ian.spiers@niccstandards.org.uk.

New Directors

We're delighted to welcome two new Directors to the NICC Board.

Petek Ergul works for Three and has years of experience in developing mobile standards, while Ian Lawrence works for BT in the Openreach division, leading a team responsible for access network strategy.

Hot topics : Next Generation Access

The transition of the Digital Britain bill through parliament, and Openreach's announcements on their Fibre To The Home (FTTH) and Fibre to the Cabinet (FTTC) plans, have focussed attention on whether there are sufficient technical standards to underpin these initiatives. Work in NICC has focussed on two areas, namely agreement of the standards for Ethernet Active Line Access (ALA) and agreement of standards to allow provision of voice over fibre.

Access

In Passive Optical Network (PON) deployments, the access network architecture is such that unbundling fibres in the same way that copper has been historically unbundled to CPs is a problem. At the same time, no-one wants a return to the situation where all CPs simply resell a wholesale broadband service. The middle ground is ALA : this allows CPs to buy VLANs (virtual pipes) of specified technical characteristics (bandwidth, QoS etc) across the bottleneck of the access network. The VLANs are then handed over to the CP at the head-end of the access network (typically where LLU equipment would have been deployed), or of course if the CP doesn't have that degree of reach they could purchase a backhaul service from a third party.

In 2009, Ofcom agreed headline service requirements for ALA via a series of workshops. Since then, the Ethernet WG within NICC has been refining these into technical requirements, formulating an

architecture and the detailed standardisation requirements. Of course, as ever we wouldn't want NICC to be re-inventing the wheel : where possible the material that the Ethernet WG has agreed has been based upon international standards agencies such as ITU, MEF and the Broadband Forum.

The NICC standards are being incorporated by Openreach into their Next Generation Access products, but they are by no means the only access network provider: a series of community broadband initiatives are springing up across the UK, and it is hoped that the NICC standards will similarly form the bedrock to allow CPs to offer services to their customers.

Voice

In FTTH implementations, voice becomes simply another application provided over the next generation pipe to the home. For example Openreach's implementation sees an Analogue Telephony Adaptor (ATA) embedded into the optical termination unit. Voice is provided as VoIP over an Ethernet VLAN, under the supervision of a callserver. This is all invisible to the end-user: the ATA provides an analogue interface matching usual customer expectations, including battery backup to deal with power failures.

NICC is working to provide a standardised interface (termed "SIP UNI") to allow callservers to control ATAs. One early implementation could be to allow 3rd party CPs to use their callservers to control the embedded ATA provided by Openreach : as such, combined with broadband connectivity using ALA standards, this would allow CPs to offer double-play provision to mimic LLU in copper areas.

In Autumn 2009, this activity wasn't even on NICC's workstack. We've striven to resolve this by having a series of focussed workshops, at which top-level requirements, and an outline architecture have been agreed. The workshops continue, in parallel with consideration by the Security, Architecture & Requirements (A&R) and Application Protocol (AP) WGs. We're hopeful of delivering the necessary standards as soon as possible: watch this space.

New Publications

Since September 2009, NICC has approved and published the following standards, all of which are available on our [website](#):

ND1638 : VOIP - Location for Emergency Calls (Architecture)

ND1639 : BICC/IP connectivity for PLMN services between NGNs

ND1640 : NGN Architecture for SS7 Signalling Transport Service between PLMNs

ND1642 : Requirements for Ethernet Interconnect and Ethernet ALA

ND1643 : Minimum Security Requirements for interconnecting Communications Providers

ND1512 : Report into the Implications of Usage of Alphanumeric (i.e. non-E.164-based) Naming in NGNs

ND1513 : Report on Dynamic Spectrum Management (DSM) Methods in the UK Access Network

ND1410 : NGN Interconnect: PSTN Transport Operational Test Manual

ND1411 : NGN Interconnect: PSTN Signalling Operational Test Manual

ND1412 : NGN Interconnect: PSTN Services Operational Test Manual

ND1413 : NGN Interconnect: PSTN Validation Testing Manual

ND1414 : NGN Interconnect: PSTN Integration Testing Manual

ND1021 : Voice Line Control for UK Interconnect using TISPAN IMS-based PSTN/ISDN Emulation

ND1026 : NGN; MTP3 over IP Interconnect between PLMNs using M2PA Protocol

ND1027 : UK BICC for use between PLMNs

Membership Fees

It's that time of year again…

The NICC Standards AGM agreed the Board proposal to hold the NICC membership fees at 2009 levels, which means Full Members will pay £2000+VAT, Associate Members £1000+VAT. Invoices are currently being issued, dated 1st April. NICC would appreciate if payment could be made in a timely manner.

WE NEED YOU!!

To progress the work the more experts, the better, especially those willing to edit. In return you'll get to influence the standards to align with your business goals, and a fuller understanding of them prior to publication. Contact paul.rosbotham@niccstandards.org.uk to talk through where you could add value and derive benefit, and we'll get you on the mailing list.