

## Pipeline's Guide to Mobile World Congress 2011

by John Wilson

Next month, GSMA's Mobile World Congress returns to Barcelona. Attendance expectations are high for the show, with the event staff planning on welcoming 50,000 attendees from over 200 countries converging on Fira de Barcelona (in Barcelona's Montjuic district) for some insight on what's next in wireless communication.

This year's event, like those in years past, promises to be simply massive. As communications providers and vendors interested in OSS and BSS, you're playing a bit of a needle-in-a-haystack game at this event, where you're as likely to get sucked into a presentation on the pros and cons of the

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"Angry Birds" app as you are to find meaningful conversations on support systems software. In order to provide a little direction, we've taken a look at the advance conference agenda to help you plan your visit more effectively.

### Monday Feb. 14th

Monday's conference programming breaks down into three categories - apps, mHealth and business services -with forums in each at 9 a.m., 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. So you can play it straight down the middle with the Business Services Symposium (developed in conjunction with the TM Forum) all day, or you can mix and match at will.

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**Morning:** The obvious choice might be the 9 a.m. Business Services Symposium keynote (developed in conjunction with the TM Forum), but the mobile health discussion in the 9 a.m. slot, Can mHealth Become a Profitable Business? How and When?, might be more interesting for those who've already been to OSS/BSS shows recently and want to hear something new, especially since plenty of mHealth products and services are in need of some OSS/BSS attention.

**Afternoon:** Sticking with the split, there's Taking Apps to the Mass Market, A Glimpse into the Future Business and Technology of mHealth and Managing Applications and Enriching the User Experience. By this time Monday, you'll know where you want to be.

**Late Afternoon:** Mobile world has some heavy hitters lined up Monday in the late afternoon with Microsoft's Steve Ballmer and Twitter's CEO, Dick Costolo, taking the stage for what they're calling "Live Keynotes". Now, Live Keynote means they're streaming live, which is a bit of a double-edged sword. On one hand, these are key talks from heavy-hitters in the tech world, but on the other hand, the guys back in the office can view the talk just as easily, and most likely have a better seat than you do, fighting crowds in the auditorium. And when's the last time a CEO really

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rocked the boat during a keynote? Still, if you don't have meetings lined up, these may be a decent way to spend a couple of hours.

#### **Tuesday Feb. 15th**

**Morning:** Tuesday kicks off with more big names in a pair of keynotes, with CEOs from Vodafone, Telefonica, AT&T, Ericsson, HTC and more. There's no denying that these are movers and shakers in the mobile world, but not directly OSS/BSS-focused. Still, you have a shot here at hearing what's going on with your competitors and potential partners/suppliers, which is especially interesting given that 2011 promises to be a pivotal year in the realm of next gen mobile network rollouts.

**Afternoon:** So important they had to split it over two sessions, the ominously titled "Network Breaking Point" is sure to interest anyone who is more familiar



with LTE than their own immediate family.

**Evening:** Another Live Keynote, this time with Google's CEO, Eric Schmidt. Attend if you'd like, but if you opt to skip in favor of drinks by the beach, you can always google it later...

### **Wednesday Feb. 16th**

**Morning:** Another pair of impressive lineups at the morning keynotes with CEOs from Cisco, Intel, Yahoo (no I will not include the exclamation point), Nokia, RIM and more. The second keynote, A 360° View on Consumer Electronics, might prove too much to resist for anyone hoping to catch a glimpse of the latest and greatest (fill in the blank), even if it does mean getting up before noon.

**Afternoon:** A pair of sessions on mobile advertising might appeal to some, but without anything OSS/BSS targeted on the table, Wednesday afternoon looks like a good time to listen to your heart and go wherever it may take you.

**Evening:** With nothing scheduled past 5, now you can knock off to the beach without the slightest twinge of guilt.

### **Thursday Feb. 17th**

**Morning:** Anyone not at the 11:30 a.m. session, NFC - Moving Beyond Payments, is sure to kick themselves in the not so distant future once cell phones have replaced credit cards, cash and bartering the family cow. We're really interested in the business support underpinnings that must accompany NFC in order for it to really take off, and we'll be interested to see the extent to which this session covers that ground.

**Afternoon:** Talk about being spoiled for choices; there are two sessions on the future of the network and LTE, as well as two more on mobile financial services. But the smart money is on Embedded Utilities: Realizing our Potential at 1:30 p.m. Everyone and their OSS/BSS obsessed mother will want to be in on the ground floor of the smart grid, and this sounds like a good place to start. It's a pity that these sessions are crammed into the final afternoon of the show, when it seems like all the good meetings are taking place in airport lounges, but if you're hanging on for another day in Barcelona, there's plenty to keep you occupied on Thursday.

So bon voyage! Enjoy Barcelona.