

Broadband World Forum 2011

By Jesse Cryderman

With the clock counting down to BBWF 2011 (just check the show web site if you need to know how many days left before the event), Pipeline takes a moment to review this fast-approaching show.

Paris, Anyone?

Like it or not, the summer of 2011 is coming to an end. While the fall trade show season may not be something you are looking forward to, the light at the beginning of the tunnel is Broadband World Forum (BBWF). This event returns to La Defense, Paris, on September 27, 2011. Paris. In September. Our bags are packed.

Desirable destination aside, there are other credible reasons why your boss should sign off on your travel to attend:

Respectable attendance: Expected to draw over 10,000 attendees, which is notable in an era of declining conferences, the show has become 'the' event for the fixed world. The fact that it's not a mega show makes it manageable for attendees to get around between sessions and visit every stand on the expo floor, if you so desire.

The demographics weigh heavy in the service provider sector (43%), and most former attendees report ample access to service providers for networking opportunities. There are more than 300 speakers and 66 countries represented, but those numbers don't tell the whole story. Still largely an event for EMEA (about 77% of attendees in 2010 were from Europe, MiddleEast and Africa), the show has a ways to go before living up to the "world" part of its name.

Programming: For the paying customer, there are four distinct conference tracks: Business Strategy, Service Implementation, Network Evolution, and Access Evolution. Sessions are broken up into 20-minute presentations followed by 30-minute interactive panel discussions.

Each day the four tracks are organized around an over-arching concept that the organizers clearly spent little time naming. Take the headline for Wednesday, for example: Convergence Delivering Opportunity and Driving Competition and Growth. That's one unmarketable mouthful. Perhaps it's shorter in French? Regardless, look to the track names for a better indication of the type of content you'll find at each session.

In addition, there are two days (Tuesday and Thursday) of programming that is focused on broadband connected verticals that should be full of insight, especially for



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operators looking for new business opportunities. Topics range from broadband-enhanced public transportation, to the development of smart cities, and are representative of major growth opportunities in the coming five years.

Lastly, there is a full slate of free programming thanks to the Broadband Masterclasses. What are Broadband Masterclasses? Bite-size, 20-minute presentations running back-to-back from 10:30AM through 4PM on Tuesday (day one) and Wednesday (day two) of the show. Tuesday's presentations center around the broadband connected and enabled home, and Wednesday's Masterclasses will focus on ethernet and backhaul.

Key Speakers: A line-up packed with C-level types from leading European and Asian operators, including: William Yeung, CEO, Hong Kong Broadband; Thierry Bonhomme, CTO, Orange France Telecom Group; James Hogan, CEO of Etihad; and Olivier Baujard, CTO, Deutsche Telekom. Also speaking are top executives from vendors like NSN and Alcatel-Lucent, as well as a presentation by the CEO of BitTorrent, which should prove quite interesting.

Floating Awards Gala: A few hundred attendees will have the pleasure of taking in the Broadband InfoVision Awards ceremony while dining and cruising down the Siene onboard the Bateau Diamante Tuesday evening. This promises to be a spectacular experience and probably the highlight of your visit. Viewing Paris, from the Siene, at dusk and into the night is an entirely different experience than any other, and comes highly recommended by members of our own staff if you can cover the price of admission at 299 Euro (not including VAT). With all of the wonderful sights along the Siene, we can't help but wonder whether anyone will be watching the awards presentation.

Sample Agenda: Day One:

While keynotes from SK Telecom, and Kevin Tao, CEO, Huawei Europe, will be informative, Eric Klinker, CEO, BitTorrent is the most interesting keynote on Tuesday. It must be strange to be invited to speak at a conference of service providers who have had to change entire business models in part due to the massive popularity of P2P services like BitTorrent. The lineup looks primed for lively discussion, so hopefully we get to see some candid dialogue.

As the session begins, it's a toss up between the IPv6 conversation at the start of the Network Evolution track, or the broadband and LTE deployment program on the Business Evolution track. If neither sounds interesting, the Connected Vehicles summit will highlight the potential for broadband in new markets.

Following a quick crepe break at 1:30, head on over to the Service Management track, which will be talking OSS/BSS exclusively, and end with refreshments at 3:35. If you stay on this track, it will be an afternoon of subscriber management discussion, starting with the future of the cloud, which looks like a winner. If you're looking to learn more about the transition to all-IP networks, than the Network Evolution track is where you should spend your afternoon.

Sessions close around 6pm on Tuesday, and if you're not lucky enough to have a ticket for the floating awards ceremony, you still have plenty of time to take in Paris and work on your fashion sense.

Day Two:

If you didn't stay out too late on Tuesday night, then the Analyst Breakfast Briefings might be your cup of tea. They start at 8am, and feature four analysts who will present on four different topics. These briefings also occur on Thursday morning (with a different lineup of analysts), so my advice is to pick one day to attend breakfast before the keynotes, but not both; you are in Paris and should come home with at least one late-night adventure story!

Keynotes on Wednesday start kind of weak, with C-levels from NSN and Alcatel-Lucent attempting to answer the unfathomable question: "Who Needs Broadband?" After listening to 45 minutes of discussion that leads up to the word "everyone," the day will get slightly more interesting as top brass from BT Group and Deutsche Telekom attempt to answer the same question. (Note to self: remember to pack NoDoz). Maybe this will turn into a "future of broadband," crystal-ball gazing session—I certainly hope so—but as it's written in the conference brochure, it looks to be a slow morning.

The Services Implementation and Access Evolution tracks look to be the best on Wednesday, with SI focused on enterprise services and AE trained on wireless broadband. Bouncing between the two isn't too difficult,

but make sure to start in the SI track and stay there until lunch, as valuable sessions cover one of the hottest areas in the industry for telcos: enterprise and cloud services. Head over to the AE track after lunch to talk wireless backhaul, femtocells, and broadband access for the underserved.

Day Three:

The final day of the conference ends with an engaging question posed to the keynote speakers: How do we leverage the cloud for network expansion? Executives from ZTE, AT&T, Hong Kong Broadband, France Telecom, and China Unicom will all weigh in, and they'll be joined by Pierre-Alain Graf, CEO, SwissGrid, who will offer some unique perspective from the energy industry.

Start your sessions in the Business Strategy track, which looks at broadband business model evolution,

and ponders services like OTT and IPTV, and whether or not they can be monetized, or serve as a retention tool. Grab a baguette at 1:15, then jump over to the SI track to attend sessions on multi-screen content and broadband TV. And then to understand the charging and management of these services, hop to the NE track at 3:40 to attend the interactive panel discussion on traffic/bandwidth control and differentiating services.

The conference ends at 6pm, and hopefully you have time and energy left to enjoy Paris. If you didn't attend the expensive awards gala, you could probably even book an inexpensive boat ride along the Siene. Regardless, the last week of September will be a great time to be in France, and BBWF will be a solid show that uncovers the true potential of broadband and offers good access to service providers without the headaches associated with navigating a mega-show.