

COTS Project: Forum

Meeting held on 04 December 2009

@ Intellect, Russell Square House, 10-12 Russell Square, WC1B 5EE



MINUTES (ABRIDGED)

1) Welcome and introduction

MT welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made around the table.

2) Developments since the last meeting

Since the last meeting in late September, a smaller steering group had been drawn together that had met in early November. This group met to discuss a set of requirements for wholesale products drafted by Sky and TalkTalk. In response to these requirements, the access infrastructure providers within the steering group worked together to produce an alternative set of requirements.

Both of these requirements documents were circulated prior to the meeting, along with the 'long list' of issues. This was developed following the last Forum meeting to aid understanding of the issues that COTS would be addressing, and to highlight where other activities would be addressing issues that COTS would not be looking at.

In discussion, the following points were made.

- It was agreed that the minutes and papers from the steering group would be made available through the website.
- It was agreed that BIS would be invited to join the steering group.

3) The long list

The forum went through the long list of issues. The following points were made.

- Driving take-up and revenue refers to both end users and wholesale customers; therefore, driving take-up and revenue could fall in the scope of COTS if a clearing house model was developed: it would be in its interests to drive adoption of its model. MP suggested that network management should be in scope where it impacts the delivery of wholesale services as well as retail services.
- Planning is not part of the COTS remit, but may be picked up elsewhere by BSG. A note on these issues will be developed as part of the COTS work.
- For every issue, traditional industry sources of advice, support and expertise are available. This is not made explicit, but is assumed.

4) Delivery of next generation broadband services – two views

The two requirements documents, reflecting the requirements of service providers and access infrastructure providers, were circulated prior to the meeting and were discussed. The steering group presented the view that the most efficient and effective way to address the differences between these two views is for some form of aggregation to sit between them; without this, developing a solution to the COTS issues would be very difficult.

The two papers are available on the website.

5) Identification of ways forward

In discussion of the two papers, and how best to take the work forward in light of these requirements documents, the following points were made.

- Any aggregator would have a technical and mediating role, but may also have a commercial role. However, whether this is practical needs to be explored.
- The group reiterated its previous support for active products to be based on the ALA requirements, and for the technical standardisation work NICC is undertaking on this. However, it will be important for more information regarding ALA to be disseminated throughout the industry.
- The focus for COTS will be enabling active products; participants agreed that wires-only and passive products would be explored in due course, but that initially service provision would be through active wholesale products based on ALA.
- Process standards were discussed, with reference made to the NICC B2B standards work. It was considered that there is considerable work to be done here, and that simply complying with the standards may not be sufficient given the nature of the challenges being discussed here.
- The key goal is to develop a framework for enabling engagement and transactions between access infrastructure providers and ISPs.
- It was agreed that the steering group should scope the requirements for an aggregator as a next step.

6) Wrap-up and next steps

A progress meeting has been organised for the wider COTS stakeholders, at which Ofcom and CSMG would launch their report into B2B interfaces. The steering group will need to present back its conclusions to date to the wider community at this meeting.

BIS informed the group that they had begun work on the Publically Available Specification (PAS) for connectivity in new-build developments. If anyone would be interested in finding out more about this work, or participating in the workshops, they should contact:

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END