

# CommsWire

Essential daily reading for the communications industry executive

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## WORLD NOW CONNECTED TO MOBILE NETWORK



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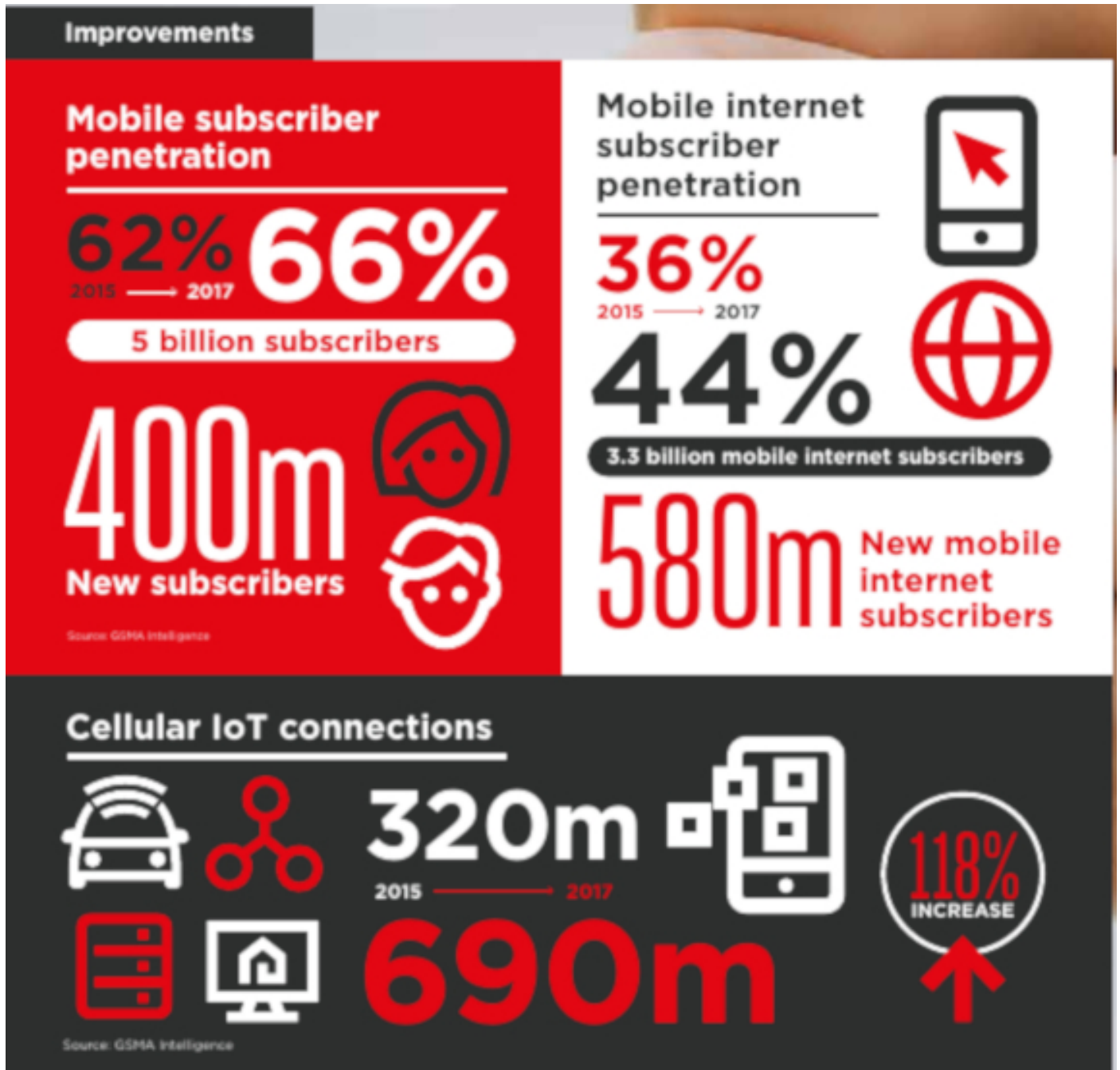
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# MORE THAN 5B NOW HAVE ACCESS TO MOBILE SERVICES: GSMA

More than five billion of the world's population are now connected to a mobile network, up from 4.6 billion at the end of 2015, according to a study from the GSM Association released at the United Nations this week.

A statement from the GSMA said the connectivity figure meant that about 66% of the world's population was now connected, meaning that about 400 million mobile subscribers have been since the end of 2015.



The growing impact reflected the mobile industry's global scale, which provided a platform to connect unconnected communities, reduce poverty, improve access to healthcare and education, and drive sustainable economic growth, the GSMA said.

The GSMA's Mobile Industry Impact [report](#) for 2018 claimed that the mobile industry had made a significant contribution to the UN's sustainable development goals.

“More than two-thirds of the people on the planet are now connected to a mobile network and, for many, mobile is the primary — sometimes only — channel for accessing the internet and life-enhancing services,” said Mats Granryd, director-general of the GSMA.

“Today’s report reiterates how the mobile industry is playing a central role in accelerating delivery of the sustainable development goals and leveraging the power of mobile networks and services to transform lives around the world.”

Other indicators of progress in the last three years were:

- About 600 million additional people, mostly from low- and middle-income countries, had begun using mobile Internet services since 2015, bringing the total to 3.3 billion at the end of 2017. By the end of this decade, it is forecast that half of the world’s population will be accessing the internet via their phones, up from 36% in 2015.
- More than 250 million people have started to use mobile money since 2015, enabling access to a range of financial services to those who would otherwise be excluded from the banking system and bringing the total number of mobile money accounts to nearly 700 million at the end of 2017.
- There are now more than 750,000 education-related apps available on smartphones, up 62% from 2015, resulting in 1.2 billion people using mobile to improve their education or the education of their children, and also bridging the gender gap in access to education.
- In 2017, signatories to the GSMA Humanitarian Connectivity Charter provided essential humanitarian assistance to more than 30 million people during epidemics and natural disasters, for example, in the aftermaths of Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico and the monsoon floods in Nepal.
- Since 2015, more than a million households have installed solar home systems using a mobile-enabled pay-as you-go model, bringing them clean and affordable access to electricity.
- Five million more people have begun using mobile-enabled agricultural services supported by the GSMA’s mNutrition Initiative since 2015, giving farmers access to vital information that allows them to improve agricultural productivity and incomes.

“We must continue to develop initiatives that connect the unconnected and drive mobile internet adoption, while scaling up the mobile-enabled products and services that are providing real-world solutions to developmental challenges,” said Granryd.

**Sam Varghese**

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# ACMA EXPANDS TELECOMMUNICATIONS CONSUMER FORUM

The Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) has expanded its Consumer Consultative Forum (CCF), with the appointment of eight new members.

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The organisations appointed to the forum by ACMA are:

- Consumer Policy Research Centre
- Country Womens' Association of Australia
- Deaf Australia
- Federation of Ethnic Communities' Council of Australia
- LegalAid NSW
- NSW Business Chamber
- South Australian Council of Social Services
- WEstjustice

Authority member, Fiona Cameron who leads the Authority on Consumer Safeguards issues, will chair the renewed CCF, joining standing members [Australian Communications Consumer Action Network](#), [Communications Alliance](#) and [Australian Mobile Telecommunications Association](#) to discuss key telecommunications issues.

"Consumers face a range of issues when it comes to navigating the communications landscape," Cameron said.

"These new appointments will help industry and government better understand community needs."

Cameron says the CCF will focus on a broad range of issues of interest to all communications consumers, including those faced with a disability, regional and remote communities as well as low income groups.

The ACMA has stated its strategic objective is to maximise the economic and social benefits of communications and media for Australia – and the CCF plays an important role in assisting the Authority to achieve a regulatory framework that anticipates change through monitoring our environment and influencing regulatory responses.

**Peter Dinham**



John de Ridder

Telecommunications Economist

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# LOCAL PHOTONIC CHIP TO BOOST 5G NETWORKS, IOT AND MORE

An innovative photonic chip solution developed jointly by three universities across Australia can "harness sound waves to speed up local networks".

We're told that it used to be known as the "information superhighway", but is actually "the fibre-optic infrastructure on which our gigabytes and petabytes of data whizz around the world at (nearly) the speed of light."



Like any highway system, we know that "increased traffic has created slowdowns, especially at the junctions where data jumps on or off the system.

"Local and access networks especially, such as financial trading systems, city-wide mobile phone networks and cloud computing warehouses, are therefore not as fast as they could be", according to the [University of Sydney](#).

It turns out this is because "increasingly complex digital signal processing and laser-based 'local oscillator' systems are needed to unpack the photonic, or optical, information and transfer it into the electronic information that computers can process.

"Now, scientists at the University of Sydney have for the first time developed a chip-based information recovery technique that eliminates the need for a separate laser-based local oscillator and complex digital signal processing system."

[Dr Elias Giacoumidis](#), joint lead author of a [new study](#), said: "Our technique uses the

interaction of photons and acoustic waves to enable an increase in signal capacity and therefore speed. This allows for the successful extraction and regeneration of the signal for electronic processing at very-high speed.”

The University explains: "The incoming photonic signal is processed in a filter on a chip made from a glass known as chalcogenide.

This material has acoustic properties that allows a photonic pulse to ‘capture’ the incoming information and transport it on the chip to be processed into electronic information.

"This removes the need for complicated laser oscillators and complex digital signal processing."

[Dr Amol Choudhary](#) from the University of [Sydney Nano Institute](#) and [School of Physics](#) said: “This will increase processing speed by microseconds, reducing latency or what is referred to as ‘lag’ in the gaming community. While this doesn’t sound a lot, it will make a huge difference in high-speed services, such as the financial sector and emerging e-health applications.”

The photonic-acoustic interaction harnesses what is known as "[stimulated Brillouin scattering](#), an effect used by the Sydney team to develop photonic chips for information processing."

Dr Choudhary continued: “Our demonstration device using stimulated Brillouin scattering has produced a record-breaking narrowband of about 265 megahertz bandwidth for carrier signal extraction and regeneration.

“This narrow bandwidth increases the overall spectral efficiency and therefore overall capacity of the system.”

Group research leader and Director of Sydney Nano, [Professor Ben Eggleton](#), said: “The fact that this system is lower in complexity and includes extraction speedup means it has huge potential benefit in a wide range of local and access systems such as metropolitan 5G networks, financial trading, cloud computing and the Internet-of-Things.”

The [study](#) is published today [in Optica](#).

Dr Choudhary said the research team’s next steps will be to construct prototype receiver chips for further testing.

The study was a collaboration with [Monash University](#) and the [Australian National University](#).

**Alex Zaharov-Reutt**

# AUSTRALIA'S EFTPOS 'TAP & PAY' FAST-TRACKS FOR TRANSPORT

**Debit network, eftpos, has announced it is "fast-tracking the enablement of eftpos Tap & Pay technology for use on buses, trains and ferries, following new consumer research that shows Australian commuters would prefer to pay for transport with eftpos debit".**

[eftpos](#) managing director Stephen Benton said that while eftpos "had been working on transport for some time, the company had this week formed a dedicated technical and business team to complete the capability rollout to financial institutions across Australia by April 2019, and was already in discussions with a number of State Governments".



He said the new transport team at eftpos would "also focus on rolling out eftpos Tap & Pay to other types of unattended payment devices such as parking metres and vending machines".

We're told the move follows the successful rollout of eftpos Tap & Pay capability to around 30 million cards and 900,000 point-of-sale terminals across Australia over the past four years.

Benton added: "As tap payments are introduced on transport systems across Australia, it is vital for eftpos debit to be included to ensure all Australians have access to the benefits of this technology and can use their own money, rather than credit.

"The inclusion of eftpos, in addition to the international credit card schemes, will also help drive competition and better outcomes for State Governments and taxpayers."

As the eftpos people explain, "transport is the next natural progression for eftpos Tap & Pay, with a new consumer survey of 1500 Australians showing that 82% of people would prefer not to use credit for transport payments".

According to the survey, debit is the preferred way to pay for transport with 37% support, while eftpos is the preferred debit brand. Preference for eftpos is particularly high for lower income people, families, over 50s and young people who regularly use public transport.

Of those Australians who only hold an eftpos card, around 20% are youth, 42% are over 50, 51% are renters and 34% are unemployed or stay at home.

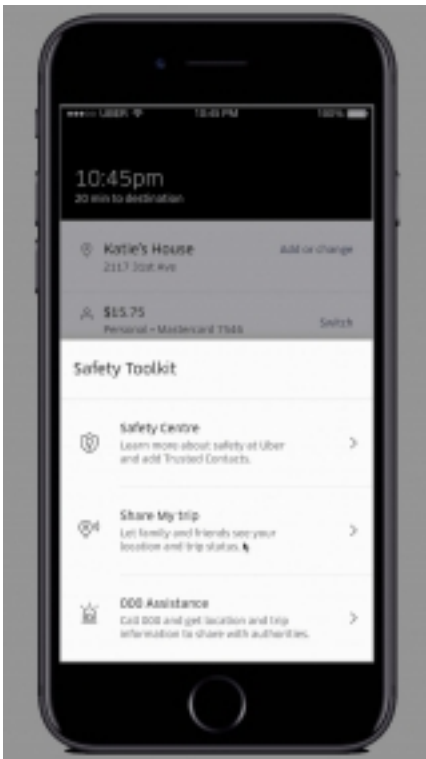
Benton said eftpos Tap & Pay for transport would "provide a number of important benefits for budget conscious eftpos cardholders, including not having to preload funds on transport cards, and a seamless interstate transport experience".

**Peter Dinham**

# UBER LAUNCHES 000 BUTTON IN APP TO 'IMPROVE SAFETY'

Uber has announced [at its blog](#), that it is "launching an emergency assistance button in Australia" as part of a new rider and driver-partner Safety Toolkit.

The company says it is "committed to helping [improve safety](#) and developing innovative products that aim to increase transparency and accountability for both riders and driver-partners on the app".



In addition, it notes it is rolling out new safety features, including an in-app emergency assistance button in Australia.

Safety Toolkit features Uber says it excited to announce:

## **000 Assistance button for both riders and driver-partners**

"Get emergency assistance by calling 000 directly from the app. We've updated both our rider and driver-partner apps with safety in mind, locating all things safety in one central place and making it accessible directly from the rider home screen or driver-partner map during each trip.

"Over the coming weeks, riders will begin to see a 'shield' icon in the bottom right-hand corner of the map screen during a trip, which simply needs to be tapped to access the Safety Centre. Driver-partners will be able to access the emergency assistance button on the left side of the driver app.

"You'll be shown your current location in the app – both on a map and as an address, so you can let the emergency operator know where you are."

## **Trusted contacts and share trip**

"Riders can select up to five friends and family members as Trusted Contacts and choose when to be prompted to share their trips with each one."

## **Safety centre**

"From the Safety Toolkit, riders can learn more about safety at Uber in one central location in the app - from driver background checks, insurance protections, to details on how to contact our 24/7 support."

## **Alex Zaharov-Reutt**

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