

CommsWire

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An iTWire publication

www.itwire.com

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Monday 25 March 2019

BIG 3 TELCOS WARNED ABOUT DISABILITY INFO



CommsWire (ISSN 2202-4549) is published by iTWire Pty Ltd. 18 Lansdown St, Hampton, Vic, 3188

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ACMA WARNS TELCOS ON INFO FAILURE FOR DISABLED CUSTOMERS

Australia's three biggest telcos – Telstra, Optus and Vodafone – have been given formal warnings by the telecoms regulator for failing to provide information about products and services that may suit the needs of consumers with a disability.

An investigation by the Australian Communications Media Authority found there were significant gaps in knowledge and awareness of disability products among consumer-facing sales staff of the three telcos.



“It is critical that consumers with a disability are able to find out about services and products that may suit their particular needs when making enquiries with their telco,” said ACMA Chair Nerida O’Loughlin.

Under the Telecommunications Consumer Protections Code, telcos are required to provide information about the disability products and services they offer to disabled consumers.

The ACMA initiated the investigation following research by the Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN) that suggested poor practice by telcos in providing information to people with disabilities.

Following the ACMA’s formal warning, Telstra, Optus and Vodafone indicated that they will ensure that their staff are equipped with the right information about products and services for people with a disability.

For more information about telco services suitable for people with disabilities, visit the [Accessible Telecoms website](#).

Peter Dinham



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OPTUS TO STOP BRAILLE BILLS, LOOKING FOR ALTERNATIVES

Australia's second largest carrier Singtel Optus will stop issuing bills in Braille to visually-impaired customers as it is moving to a new billing platform, the telco says.

An Optus spokesperson said in a response to a query from *CommsWire* that there were 12 customers who would be affected by the change and they were being contacted to discuss alternatives.



"All of these customers receive their bill today in Braille plus an alternative method, such as a paper bill, SMS or email," the spokesperson said.

Options that were available included:

- Accessing the bill online or via SMS by using screen reader software or
- An Optus team member calling the customer each month to read through their bill over the phone.

"We will continue to work with the impacted customers to find a solution that suits their needs," the spokesperson added.

The change in billing was first mentioned on the [3AW Rumour File](#) on Friday.

Sam Varghese



John de Ridder

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NBN CO WARNS AGAINST SCAMMERS IMPERSONATING ITS STAFF

Australia's national broadband network provider NBN Co has warned customers not to be taken in by scammers who try to impersonate its officials.

The company issued the caution after it there was a 84% increase in inquiries about suspected scams to its contact centre since October last year.

About 28% originated from residents in NSW, 24% came from Victoria and 19% from Queensland.

The company has provided [a checklist](#) for those who suspect that someone who claims to be from the NBN Co does not represent the company.

NBN Co chief security officer Darren Kane said: "We urge residents and businesses to be vigilant of callers claiming to be from NBN Co requesting personal or financial information.

"We will never make unsolicited calls or door knock to sell broadband services to the public. We will never request remote access to a resident's computer and we will never make unsolicited requests for payment or financial information.

"Protect yourself by verifying who are you are talking to. If in doubt, hang up and call your retail service provider customer service centre to check if the call is legitimate."

The company said:

- "Remember NBN Co is a wholesaler, which means we do not sell phone or Internet services directly to the public. People need to contact their preferred phone and internet provider in order to make the switch.
- "Do not share your financial information (i.e. bank, credit card or gift card details) or personal details with an unsolicited caller or door knockers trying to seek payment for an NBN service.
- "Never give an unsolicited caller remote access to your computer or devices via the installation of programs.
- "NBN Co does not make automated calls (i.e. robocalls) to advise of disconnections to a service.
- "If in doubt, hang up and call your retail service provider on their official customer service centre number to check if the call is legitimate."

Sam Varghese

SYDNEY UNI DEVELOPING BETTER SATELLITE LAUNCH PLATFORM

The School of Aerospace, Mechanical and Mechatronic Engineering at the University of Sydney says it is one step closer to developing a more efficient and cost-effective access to space platform for satellite launches in an international collaboration.

As part of the [University](#)'s Clean Combustion Group, Associate Professor [Matthew Cleary](#), Associate Professor [Ben Thornber](#), and Dr [Dries Verstraete](#) have joined the International Responsive Access to Space project, with the aim of building the world's first successful rotating detonation engine to send payloads into space.



Led by DefendTex, the project was awarded a \$3 million CRC-P grant in 2018 as a federal government investment into developing Australia's space industry.

The project includes researchers from the University of Sydney, Universität der Bundeswehr München, the University of South Australia, RMIT, Defence Science and Technology Group and Innosync Pty.

The university says Associate Professor Cleary's group has focused its research on combustion and has initiated computational fluid dynamics simulations, with preliminary results demonstrating the efficacy of the rotating detonation engine.

The group also includes three aerospace engineering researchers who are working on launch system conceptual design and rotating detonation cycle performance and efficiency analysis.

“Since the project kicked off we have worked with our collaborators to develop new computational methods to investigate supersonic combustion, which is a process known as detonation,” Associate Professor Cleary said.

“Our preliminary findings from simulations of a model rotating detonation engine have led to some interesting findings about the stability of detonations in an annular channel, in particular with regard to the importance of designing the combustor geometry such that the detonation is stable and rocket thrust can be sustained continuously.

“This information is being fed to our collaborators who are now starting work on ground testing an engine,” he said.

While conventional rockets carry both oxygen and fuel onboard, the team has been researching methods for rockets to effectively collect oxygen from the atmosphere during lower atmospheric ascent.

“What’s exciting about rotating detonation engines is the potential to operate them in a so-called “air breathing” mode,” Professor Cleary said.

“The purpose of this function is to reduce the mass of the launch vehicle and increase efficiency, reduce costs, and potentially allow for larger payloads, such as satellites.”

Professor Christian Mundt from the Universität der Bundeswehr München has been working closely with Associate Professor Cleary’s team and will be performing simulations to test the engine’s air breathing function.

“The propulsion concept of the rotating detonation engine is very promising for the future because of its cycle advantages — we are very glad to be part of this important research project,” said Professor Mundt.

With increased global investment in space technology and commercial satellites, Associate Professor Ben Thornber believes the project is well placed to make a substantive impact on Australia’s space economy.

“Our advancement of modelling of high-speed propulsion is directly aligned to Australia’s strategic investment in a space agency, and aims to enable Australian industry to access the small satellite launch market, which is valued at \$16 billion over the next decade.”

DefendTex’s Chief Executive Officer, Travis Reddy believes the current research is on track to developing “a world first Rotating Detonation Engine capable of providing Australia’s first sovereign launch capability for Responsive Access to Space”.

The Responsive Access to Space project has been funded until 2021 and has attracted over \$4 million of cash and in-kind contributions from industry and university stakeholders.

Peter Dinham

EUROPE READY TO IGNORE US DEMANDS FOR HUAWEI BAN

The European Commission is set to urge countries within the European Union to ignore calls from the United States to ban Chinese telecommunications equipment vendor Huawei Technologies from playing a role in 5G networks within the political bloc.

A **Reuters** [report](#), citing people who were familiar with the matter, said the 28 nations within the EU — Britain is set to leave soon, with a date not yet set — had been asked to share more data to tackle any risks that were associated with the rollout of the next-generation of telecommunications technology.

The report said the head of digital for the EC, Andrus Ansip, would make the recommendations on Tuesday; while not binding, they will have the necessary political heft which could finally end in legislation.

For nearly two years, the US has been pushing countries it considers allies to avoid using equipment from Chinese companies, Huawei foremost, in 5G networks. But Washington has produced no proof to back its claims that these products could be used to spy for China.

Only [Australia](#) and [New Zealand](#) have fallen in line with American dictates, but Wellington has now [indicated](#) that the initial refusal for telco Spark to use Huawei gear is not the end of the matter. Huawei [sued the US](#) on 7 March, seeking to be reinstated as a telco supplier in the country.

Whether the EU directives will be followed by the UK or not is uncertain, given that London is set to leave the bloc soon. But last month, the head of the UK's National Cyber Security Centre, [told a conference in Brussels](#) that any likely risk posed by Huawei was manageable.

"Because of our 15 years of dealings with the company and 10 years of a formally agreed mitigation strategy which involves detailed provision of information, we have a wealth of understanding of the company," Martin said.

"We also have strict controls for how Huawei is deployed. It is not in any sensitive networks — including those of the government. Its kit is part of a balanced supply chain with other suppliers. Our regime is arguably the toughest and most rigorous oversight regime in the world for Huawei."

Ansip is set to tell EU nations to use processes detailed in the directive on network and information systems which was adopted in 2016 and also the recently introduced Cyber Security Act, the report said.

An EU-China summit on 9 April is expected to discuss this and other related topics such as gaining broader access to the Chinese economy.

Sam Varghese

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