Operational separation welcomed

The recent announcement by the Government that Telecom will be operationally separated (split into network, wholesale and retail arms) has been welcomed by InternetNZ.

Executive Director Keith Davidson describes the operational separation determination as a critical milestone in leveling the playing field for the telecommunications industry. "The Government is to be congratulated for proceeding with the operational separation plan largely as originally envisaged," he says.

"Separation of the network, wholesale and retail arms will provide the correct incentives for the three divisions for their future. The critical aspects of "Equivalence of Inputs" have been retained, along with strong requirements for independence in the Oversight Group.

"While the determination sets a tight timeframe, it is clear that Telecom and the Government will be working in a spirit of cooperation to ensure the plan's success by separation day."

InternetNZ President Pete Macaulay says the determination will "drive real benefits into the market for innovative and cost effective network products and services".

Telecom has until October 24 to prepare its draft separation plan, after which the industry and the public will have an opportunity to comment. The determination can be found at www.med.govt.nz/telecommunications. InternetNZ is planning to make submissions on the Telecom draft.

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Rural broadband workshop

In September, InternetNZ and Local Government New Zealand co-hosted a workshop on rural broadband in central Wellington. Between 30 and 40 stakeholders from local government and the ICT industry attended.

The workshop was designed to assist people in formulating their submissions on the Ministry of Economic Development's recently-released TSO (Telecommunications Service Obligations) discussion document. This relates to the provision of telecommunications services to people in "commercially non-viable areas", which is currently subsidised by the industry.

Highlights included a panel discussion on the challenges of delivering rural broadband as well as presentations by the State Services Commission (Central Government Broadband Demand Mapping Project), and WIZwireless.

The deadline for submissions on the Telecommunications Service Obligations (TSO) discussion paper has been extended to mid-October. Of key interest are questions around whether a broadband TSO is needed. InternetNZ will file a submission responding to this.

Convergence beckons

InternetNZ is sponsoring the breakfast at Convergence Oceania 07.

The event is being organised by the Wireless & Broadband Forum and will be held at SkyCity Convention Centre in Auckland on November 13. It is targeted at IT decision makers with a need for information on wireless and broadband technologies and includes seminars, an expo and panel discussions.

InternetNZ makes radio spectrum submission

In September, InternetNZ delivered its submission on the Ministry of Economic Development discussion paper "Radio Frequency Auction: 2.3GHz and 2.5GHz Bands".

The Ministry's discussion paper says auctioning management rights to radio spectrum in the 2.3GHz and 2.5GHz bands will make spectrum available for nationwide and regional wireless services, including WiMAX.

The Government intends to hold the auction in December 2007.

InternetNZ has commented on several aspects of the Ministry's discussion paper and has put forward a number of suggestions. You can view the submission on the InternetNZ website.

Pepping up performance

The REANNZ Operations Team continues to support members and make improvements to network performance.

The first KAREN Member's Report released in July 2007 provides an overview of activities supporting members and useful information on network performance for the six months to 30 June 2007.

Connecting members to KAREN has been one of the top priorities for the team, with 46 connections supporting 15 Members and 1 Associate Member being made to the network. Planning is also well on the way for connecting two further members.

In June, the maximum data packet size that can be used across the network was increased. This means larger chunks of information can now flow through the network, creating the capability to move greater amounts of data at higher speeds.

Individual network streams of over 300Mbps and greater have been recorded recently as KAREN members really start to take advantage of the network.

KAREN has peering arrangements in place with 16 international networks, the most recent being the University of California at San Diego, Google (excluding YouTube) and NASA.

REANNZ has also recently revamped the technical section of its website. The Technical Centre will be the first port of call for IT specialists for detailed information on how to connect to and tune for KAREN, and features a user support guide, standards, specifications and protocols, technical FAQs, and technical documents.

Further information on network performance and activities can be found at: www.karen.net.nz/publications/

Article courtesy of REANNZ.

.nz registrations hit 300,000

The number of registrations of domain names under the .nz top level domain has reached 300,000.

The rate of growth is showing no signs of slowing, which is good news for the New Zealand Internet and the large number of authorised registrars operating in the .nz domain name space.

Registrations reached 250,000 in October 2006, having previously reached 200,000 in September 2005.

The average rate of new domain names created per month in 2006/07 was 7451, compared with 6280 for 2005/06. Most of the growth has been occurring in the .co.nz domain.

The .nz domain space has become highly competitive since the introduction of the Shared Registry System in 2002 and there are now over 70 authorised registrars offering .nz names to businesses and the public.

Number of .nz domain names created each month
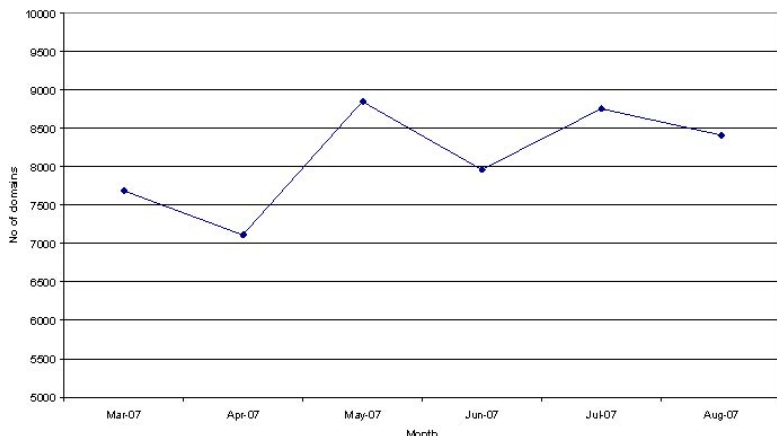
August is IP number month

August 2008 is shaping up to be "IP number month" with three significant events scheduled. First up, from August 4-8 in Queenstown, is the APAN26 (Asia Pacific Advanced Network Consortium) meeting hosted by REANNZ. This five-day bi-annual event will showcase applications in medicine, environmental protection and monitoring, genomics and agrinomics research, early warning systems for pandemics, digital curation and archiving, and collaborative tools and immersive environments. Around 300 delegates are anticipated.

Likely to follow, InternetNZ is planning an "IPv6 Hui" in Christchurch. The prime audience would be CIOs and CTOs to increase awareness of issues with the IPv4 space running out and to take into account IPv6 in network upgrades.

This will precede the APNIC (Asia Pacific Network Information Centre) meeting, from August 26-29 in Christchurch, hosted by InternetNZ. APNIC is the Regional Internet Registry for the Asia Pacific region, representing 56 economies. It is responsible for allocating Asia Pacific IP addresses, AS (Autonomous System) numbers, and "in-addr.arpa" domain delegations. The event will include a range of technical presentations, tutorials and special interest workshops, finishing with APNIC's annual member meeting.

InternetNZ commends broadband report

InternetNZ commends a draft report released last month by The New Zealand Institute - "Defining a Broadband Aspiration: How much does broadband matter and what does New Zealand need?".

In the report, the Institute conservatively identifies potential national economic benefits from broadband of between $2.7 and $4.4 billion per year, and it could be considerably more when innovation opportunities are also taken into account.

The full report can be viewed on the New Zealand Institute website: www.nzinstitute.org

Upcoming KAREN workshops

Registrations are now open for the second of two technical workshops on advanced video conferencing and collaboration over KAREN.

Hosted by the HIT Lab NZ, the workshop is being held on November 23 at the University of Canterbury and will cover a range of access grid and video conferencing issues.

Visit news/events at www.avcc.karen.net.nz for more information and to book your place.

The Advanced Network Capability Build Fund is supporting two free workshops in November to assist members of the KAREN community to prepare their identity and access management infrastructure for membership of IT trust federations.

The workshop is being led by Professor James Dalziel from Macquarie University and will feature a range of topics including PKI Certificates and their use, and Shibboleth and related technologies.

It is in Auckland on November 5 and travels to Christchurch on November 6.

Refreshing the Digital Strategy

Janet Mazenier
Acting Manager, Digital Development, MED

The Digital Future Summit 2.0 planned for 28 and 29 November 2007 is one aspect of the wider Digital Strategy refresh, which also involves a series of informal stakeholder engagements, the Summit and a post-Summit public submission process.

The Government launched V1.0 of the Digital Strategy in May 2005. It focused primarily on the delivery and management by government agencies of funds and initiatives to support communities and improve the public sector's delivery of services.

Now there is a move to link Digital Strategy V2.0 more closely with the Government's Economic Transformation (ET) Agenda. Also, it has become clear that the Digital Strategy broadband speed targets need revising and new initiatives such as sustainability and convergence of broadcasting and telecommunications need to be considered.

Five broad themes have been developed to underpin the design of the refresh and the Summit:

- Affordable, fast broadband for all New Zealanders

- ICT driving creativity, innovation, productivity and wealth creation

- ICT skills and capability – education and life-long learning

- NZ Community Content - harnessing our unique identity, strengthening communities

- Sustainable Development – ICT supporting efficiency and conservation of resources.

A comprehensive on and off-line communications plan pre- and post-Summit will include web forums (at www.digitalstrategy.govt.nz/discussion), blogs, a wiki, a Second Life conference, stakeholder consultation, and media engagement.

Participation by InternetNZ members is invited. In particular, participation in the on-line forums and blogs will be especially useful for the success of the online channels as we head towards the Summit.

Most of the existing Digital Strategy V1.0 initiatives are in varying stages of implementation, with outcomes and impacts not yet well understood. Process reviews of the two major funds (The Broadband Challenge and Community Partnership Funds) have been completed and an achievements report and series of case studies will be published just prior to the Summit in order to communicate the impacts and progress of the Strategy.

The Summit

The Digital Future Summit 2.0 is considered the forum for major cross-sector stakeholder engagement which enables views and ideas for the revised Strategy to be developed. It has been designed to inform as well as enable interaction and debate. 550 delegates will sit on mixed tables of 10 and work through concepts and ideas to respond to the call for action to establish a revised agenda for New Zealand's digital future.

Summit attendance is open to the public with some discounted tickets being set aside for not-for-profit community organisation members and some Gen-Y participants (these are being rapidly secured).

Technology will be showcased at the Summit, underpinning the message delivery by speakers and to support the Summit programme.

The focus is on technology as an enabler for the speakers in the delivery of their points to the audience and most, if not all technology solutions are being donated by Summit sponsors, in addition to their financial contribution. In this context, Technology means Information and Communications Technology (ICT) – electronic devices, software and communication mechanisms to capture, store, process, transmit and retrieve information.

The two days of the Summit will be webcast live by one of the sponsors. The Wellington City Council is streaming the webcast to an open forum in Wellington and the conference will also be simulcast in Second Life which will be shown in a Second Life conference centre where people as 'avatars' can gather to watch the Summit. There is also an opportunity to allow Second Lifers to submit questions - probably using instant messaging - to the speakers.

The simulcast will be shown on a screen at the Summit, in an attempt to give Summit attendees an understanding of Second Life and what it is all about. After the Summit the Second Life 'conference room' will be one of the channels made available for post-Summit discussion and related Digital Strategy issues.

The Digital Strategy refresh programme and Summit will inform Digital Strategy v2.0 - to be produced for public submission in the first quarter of 2008, and delivered within the auspices of the Digital Strategy framework.

This 'refreshed' action plan will be designed to reflect current challenges and opportunities particularly around broadband infrastructure and ICT as an enabler for New Zealand economic transformation.

It is intended to maintain the "three Cs" framework and identify new areas for collective action within this framework across the business, community and government sectors.