

ing vessels is actively monitored by a relevant authority for potential infringements,” Pipe said.

The Australian Federal Police said it had only pursued one incursion to date, by a fisherman off Sydney, which is currently before the courts.

But consultant Brett Worrall, who acted as the chief operating officer of the PPC-1 build in Sydney, said “while we were out laying PPC-1 we observed crab and lobster pots being laid in the cable zone and fishermen transiting the cable zone.” Worrall added that he lacked visibility on how authorities actually policed the zone and enforced the legislation.

Kordia, which is currently planning a Sydney-NZ build, said that as a potential cable operator it would expect pro-active monitoring of the cable protection zones as well as an actual policy statement on the methodology and process behind the monitoring.

Joining the chorus for improved monitoring, Southern Cross Cable stakeholder Optus said that “monitoring is reactive and relies on observation by third parties advising authorities of breaches possibly after the event. As noted in [a] March 2009 desktop exercise, submarine cable infrastructure particularly in the Sydney Zones is of national importance. [The code] would not prevent a major submarine cable outage either through deliberate or inadvertent breaches without adequate monitoring.”

The ACMA intends to review the industry feedback and make recommendations to the Communications Minister.

Grahame Lynch

AUSTRALIA

AdMob: iPhone most dominant in Australia

Australia is a hotbed of iPhone activity and the iPhone OS is the dominant smartphone in the country by a long way, according to a traffic report generated by AdMob, which serves banner and text advertising across some 15,000 mobile web sites and applications worldwide.

The AdMob Mobile Metrics Report for Southeast Asia shows the iPhone OS is most dominant in Australia, Singapore and Hong Kong, with a respective December 2009 market share of 93%, 84% and 76%. The three countries are responsible for 69% of the region’s iPhone traffic.

iPhone’s gains in the three markets came at the expense of Symbian OS, which lost 39 percent of traffic compared to 2008 data in Australia, and 29% and 16% in Singapore and Hong Kong.

While there is no doubt that the iPhone is growing in popularity here, the data collected is likely skewed in favour of Apple’s smartphone according to Telsyte principal analyst for mobile and wireless Warren Chaisatien, who suggested that iPhone users are more active on the types of sites and applications that would be served AdMob advertising.

Other smartphones, such as Blackberry, were predominantly used by business users for email access, with only some Internet access. According to Telsyte data from 2009, the iPhone had a still healthy 25 percent of the market and Chaisatien expects that to have jumped to around 30 percent today.

In other parts of Southeast Asia, Nokia and the Symbian OS still reign supreme, according to the AdMob report. Nevertheless, Symbian and other platforms could have a huge struggle on their hands to stay competitive with Apple’s iPhone and the more recent Android OS from Google, according to Chaisatien. He said that momentum for Android was growing in Australia thanks to good early reports, and he suggested that the big loser was Windows Mobile, both in the business and consumer sectors.

“Before Windows Mobile 7.0 was released in Barcelona a few weeks ago, [Microsoft] had nothing to impress the market with,” he said. “At the same time, more mobile nimble competitors have raised the bar quite high in terms of user interface. With Window Mobile 7, my view is that it’s make or break. It’s quite impressive but they have lost so much momentum and it will be hard to get that back,” said Chaisatien.

He also noted that Nokia had lost ground with Symbian, particularly after its decision to open up the operating system to open source developers. He said that decision had hurt Nokia in the business market, where CTO were more conservative than consumer users.

On the other hand, he suggested that RIM and its Blackberry were still holding market share in the business market because RIM had control of both the hardware and the software, which gave the corpo-

Internet tops mobiles for connecting with friends

The Internet has usurped the mobile phone as the preferred method to communicate with family and friends, according to results from Nielsen's 2010 Internet & Technology Report.

It found that 44 percent of internet users favoured the Internet for communication, up from 33 percent in 2008, while only 31 percent of internet users preferred the mobile phone as a communication tool, down from 38 percent in 2008.

The report also found that internet usage in Australia continues to grow, with the average Australian internet user now spending 17.6 hours per week online. The jump was 9% in the last year and a 28.5 percent increase compared to 2007 levels.

Greater penetration of broadband was a key driver, with Internet users with broadband access spending an average of 19.7 hours per week online. However, it was fixed rather than mobile broadband that provided the boost, according to Lillian Zrim, research manager of Nielsen's online division.

"Mobile broadband actually recorded a decline in household access and is not likely to have contributed greatly to the increase in time spent amongst Internet users," she told CommsDay, adding that the growing number of unlimited access packages was most likely going to push usage even further.

Greater Internet usage was also not at the expense of other forms of media, according to the report, which suggested that Australians continue to spend a significant amount of time multi-tasking media. Overall, almost half of Internet users (49%) multi-task television and the Internet at the same time, and 39 percent multi-task radio and the Internet.

The heaviest users of the Internet were those aged 16 to 29 years (22 hours per week), compared to 30 to 49 year olds who averaged 18.2 hours per week and the over 50s who spent an average of 15.5 hours online per week. Internet users aged over 50 now spend almost as much time online as they do watching television.

Geoff Long

Foxtel boss flays licence fee rebates: "it's absurd"

Foxtel CEO Kim Williams has flared up afresh at the announcement by communications minister Stephen Conroy that terrestrial broadcasters' license fees will be slashed, slamming the decision as "absurd" and a "massive market distortion."

The rebates are set at 33% this year and 50% for 2011, and were originally cast by Conroy as a recognition of disparities between fees in Australia and overseas, as well as of the technological and commercial challenges facing the TV sector. But the move has since drawn fire from several quarters; subscription TV players have reacted angrily at missing out on the windfall enjoyed by their free-to-air counterparts, while federal opposition leader Tony Abbott has questioned the rebate scheme after it was reported that Conroy had met with Seven Network half-owner Kerry Stokes at a ski resort shortly prior to the fee cut.

"The broadcasting licences aren't licences to compete, they're licences to print money," fumed Williams in an article in *The Australian*, whose publisher News Limited owns 25% of Foxtel. He claimed that the soon-to-be-slashed license fees bought a raft of benefits from free Freeview advertising to a ubiquitous signal and gifted spectrum "worth billions" while "Foxtel, by contrast, established its own digital platform, at a cost of \$1.6 billion, with no government gifts... and, with Austar, has to pay \$200m a year for cable and satellite capacity."

Williams also complained that the fee cuts were "just the latest in a series of generous presents the broadcasters have been given," including a A\$260 million subsidy nine years ago to switch over to digital broadcasting equipment and A\$160 million earlier this year to get their signal into rural and remote communities.

"This is massive market distortion that is hugely damaging to businesses like mine," said Williams. "Is all this protectionism going to make Australia's broadcasters perform any better? No; it will slow their improvement. And the principle extends to the whole economy."