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Unlimited Bandwidth; Ubiquitous Access

The explosive growth in bandwidth and new forms of networking technology will allow marketers to reach communities of one or 100,000 with near equal ease and cost effectiveness. The confluence of Internet, mobile telephony, satellite communications and new media is a potentially game-changing transformation that will disrupt historic methods of marketing products and services in unanticipated ways, changing the way brands will be sustained.

Witness Telstra, the Australian

telecom, which built a national wireless broadband 3G 850 MHz network, Next G™, that brings its customers wide-area wireless voice telephony, video and broadband data, all in a mobile environment. Launched in October 2006, the Next G network is the largest and fastest mobile network in Australia, delivering network download speeds of up to 14.4MB/s. The capabilities offered by 3G technology are, in turn, changing the way Australian business owners operate.

“We have salmon farms in Tasmania where the health of the

fish, feedings, everything central to that business, is literally being monitored in real time with video cameras and motion sensors and other technologies,” notes Sol Trujillo, CEO of Telstra, the largest provider of both local and long distance telephone services, mobile services, dialup, wireless, DSL and cable Internet access in Australia. “We’ve actually driven our own field force productivity up by 50 percent by leveraging our own technology.”

Telstra technicians are outfitted with 3G devices that have cameras and video capabilities,

as well as laptop-embedded trucks. When stymied by an issue, they simply call the company's central office and present the situation with photos or video to get expert advice while still on-site. What's more, customers are demonstrating enthusiasm for the added capabilities by migrating over to the 3G platform—and ponying up \$20 more per month for the privilege.

With connectivity spreading and data delivery speeds rising across the globe, soon even people in the most remote areas will have access to email and the Internet, noted Paul Gaske, executive vice president and general manager for the North American Division at Hughes Network Systems, LLC, a global provider of broadband satellite networks and services for enterprises, governments, small businesses and consumers. "We're one of a number of players that are launching a series of satellite-based mobile communications technologies over the next one to three years," he said. "The idea is that when you are out of reach of the towers that normally communicate with

your device, you can then have the satellite deliver that service to you."

Hughes is already serving villages in India with Fusion, a satellite product that offers broadband access—and related capabilities, such as banking transactions or airline ticket purchases—to residents at a central location. Over three years, the service has been put in place in more than 10,000 locations.

That ubiquitous rapid connectivity will also permit marketers to reach out to consumers in more places and more efficiently and effectively than ever. Already, UK grocery giant Tesco is using a Hughes satellite network to support video promotions on display throughout its stores. "Using flat screens positioned in various areas of the store, they're able to broadcast appropriate messages in each department," explained Gaske. "It's a sort of mini-TV network that lets them place ad components in different locations at different times of the day."

Going forward, Gaske sees new applications for cell phones

further customizing marketing efforts to a customer's interest or location. "There are a lot of creative things people are trying to sort through now," he said. "For example, you'll walk by an ice cream store or a coffee shop and your cell phone will offer you a coupon for that store."

3G devices with the ability to read QR codes will take that notion a step further by allowing customers to request related offers or promotions as they enter an establishment or view an ad. Two-dimensional codes that link directly to an Internet address when scanned by a mobile device, QR codes were originally used as tracking devices for car parts. The advent of 3G phones has transformed the codes into a new marketing tool.

"Companies that buy an ad will receive these codes, which customers can scan to receive information, coupons or whatever," explained Trujillo. "It gets around the privacy issue, because customers choose whether they want to see what's offered. And advertisers can update the offering at any time." ▲

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