

## Ofcom Awards Three New Community Radio Licences

● **The United Kingdom's Office of Communications (Ofcom) awarded three community radio licenses**, valid for five years, to EAVA FM, Demon FM and Kohinoor FM in June. The three are all based in Leicester.

Community radio services are provided on a non-profit basis focusing on providing specific social benefits to enrich a particular geographical community or a community of interest and typically cover a small geographical area.

EAVA FM (East African Voice Association) is based at the St. Mathews Community Solution Centre and serves the East Africans community with the aim to socially develop, inform and entertain with broadcasts of local news, enterprise, music, information, cultural and educational programmes, all supported by community members and volunteers, private organisations and the public sector.

Demon FM ([www.demonfm.co.uk](http://www.demonfm.co.uk)) based at the De Montfort University Students' Union, also works with other further and higher



education institutions and will broadcast to young people, primarily between the ages of 16 and 30.

Its broadcasts will include programmes made by members of the target community and it will be a showcase of creative talent, including live events.

Kohinoor FM will serve Leicester's Punjabi speaking population of all ages and faiths, including Hindu, Muslim and Sikh, with a broad range of programmes for community members who cannot access information through normal media channels broadcast the English language or provide programmes not relevant to their tastes and interests.

## Hong Kong government to create single Unified Carrier License

● **The Hong Kong government decided to create the Unified Carrier Licence (UCL) as a single licensing vehicle for fixed, mobile and/or converged services in May.**

This move is subject to the negative vetting of the amendment regulations by the Hong Kong's Legislative Council and upon implementation, the Telecommunications Authority (TA) will issue UCLs to all new applicants providing carrier services, while existing licenses will remain in force until expiry, after which the licensees will be issued with UCL's.

This move was driven by what's commonly referred to as fixed-mobile convergence (FMC), where the distinction between fixed and mobile networks and services become increasingly blurred due to market and technology developments.

The new UCL-based licensing will let facility-based operators provide different services under a single and flexible licensing framework, thereby paving the way for FMC.

To protect consumers, the Office of the Telecommunications Authority (OFTA) decided to introduce a license condition under the UCL which empowers the TA to issue codes of practice in connection with consumer affairs and covering matters relating to the better resolution of customer complaints in relation to contractual issues.



## India adds 8.46 million new telephone connections in May

● **The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India** announced in June that the number of fixed and wireless telephone subscribers increased by 8.46 million in May, 2008 representing an accelerating rate of growth over the 8 million added in April.

Over the same period, the total number of telephone connections reaches 317 million at the end of May 2008, compared to 308.51 million in April.

The overall tele-density was 27.59% at the end of May, versus 26.89% in April, while total wireless subscribers, including GSM, CDMA and wireless local loop (WLL) subscribers stood at 277.92 million at the end of May. During that month, 8.62 million wireless subscribers were added, compared to 8 million in April.

Over the same period, the overall number of wireline subscribers fell slightly from 39.21 million subscribers in April to 39.05 million in May 2008.

At the same time, the number of broadband subscribers, meaning those with connections supporting 256 Kbps of higher download speeds reaching 4.15 million by the end of May, up from 4.01 million by the end of April 2008.

# Finland re-assigns frequencies

● **Finland's government has decided to re-allocate** available radio frequencies released by the digital switchover to a range of services, including new television channels, broadband mobile networks, and high definition TV.

These changes to the frequency allocation plan were decided on 19 June and came into force on 1 July.

One new national multiplex will be allocated to television broadcasting, with the capacity of the multiplex depending on the packaging technology used.

The 790-862 MHz band of UHF frequencies will be allocated to digital broadband 800 mobile networks, as the band is particularly suitable for high-speed wireless broadband services, especially outside built-up areas.

The same band will also be used for radio microphone and military purposes.

For now, the use of wireless audio devices, such as microphones, can continue as before and new frequency bands will be allocated to these devices later.

Frequencies will also be allocated to future high definition television (HDTV) broadcasts. Two national HDTV multiplexes will be included in the VHF frequency band (174-230 MHz) and one HDTV multiplex covering the Helsinki Metropolitan Area in the UHF band.

These frequency allocations will not influence the current television transmissions, with the technology currently required for watching TV remaining valid until the end of 2016 at least.

The first test of HDTV (high-definition TV) transmissions is tentatively planned for September 2009, at the earliest, to supplement the existing supply.



## FCC adopts measures benefiting Americans with speech and hearing disabilities

● **The United States' communications regulator**, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has taken important regulator steps providing Americans with hearing and speech disabilities with access to the telephone network which is functionally equivalent to voice telephone services.

Until this measure, there was no uniform, consistent way for hearing users of voice services to communicate with speech or hearing impaired users with telecommunications relay service (TRS), and newer, Internet-based forms of TRS, including video relay service (VRS) and Internet Protocol (IP) relay services.

Furthermore, TRS users have typically not been able to access to emergency services but the FCC's order now ensures that Internet-based TRS users have functionally equivalent access to emergency services as normal voice users.

Voice-over-IP service providers must now route emergency calls from Internet-based TRS users to the appropriate emergency services and Internet-based TRS providers must notify their users of these changes.

Internet-based TRS service providers must comply with these directives no later than 31 December, 2008.

Meanwhile, the FCC also extended the time telemarketers must honour Do-Not-Call listed numbers from five years to indefinitely.

This measure is in line with Congress's mandate in the Do-Not-Call Improvement Act of 2007, prohibiting removal of numbers from the Registry unless the consumer cancels the number's registration or it's been disconnected and reassigned or is otherwise invalid.

The Federal Trade Commission has already committed to retain numbers in the registry indefinitely.

## Federal Network Agency allocates 116 111 for youth hotline

● **Germany's regulator, the Federal Network Agency for Electricity, Gas, Telecommunications, Post and Railway (FNA)** has allocated the nationwide number 116 111 to the association Nummer gegen Kummer e. V. (loosely translated: "call number in case of grief or trouble") to use for a youth hotline, for which it currently uses a toll-free (0) 800 number.

The 116 111 number can be called from both a fixed or mobile phone and according to the allocation notice, the service must give children who need supervision and protection the chance to voice their worries and to talk about problems and to find a competent contact person in an emergency.

Numbers beginning with 116 are assigned by the EU Commission to services of social value, which can be reached free of charge throughout Europe and are allocated by the relevant regulator in each EU country.

The 116 111 number is the first to be allocated by the FNA under the EU Commission's specifications and as such, the FNA supports endeavours to make telephone services available throughout Europe.

This allocation comes into immediate effect so the association can take the necessary steps for technical implementation without further delay.