

## **CONSUMER BROADBAND LABELS**

### **Workshop and Focus Group Discussion** 15 December 2017

**Venue: International Institute of Information Technology Bangalore**  
**([www.iiitb.ac.in](http://www.iiitb.ac.in))**

**Opening Session:** Empowering Informed Choices of Broadband Consumers via Information Disclosure

#### **Speakers**

- Prof. V. Sridhar, IIIT-B
- Prof. R. Chandrasekhar, IIIT-B
- Rahul Singh, CUTS
- Mahesh Uppal, COMFIRST
- Shri. Kapil Handa, Jt. Adviser, TRAI

*Following were discussed by the speakers:*

1. TRAI's initiatives on quality of data services initiated in 2014, followed by consultation papers released in 2016 and 2017;
2. TRAI's "MySpeed" app for crowdsourcing quality of network for measurement and analysis;
3. TRAI's consultation process on "In-Building" solutions that is expected to improve the Quality of Service (QoS);
4. Need for appropriate measurements and analysis of data required for prescribing quality of service guidelines at granular levels;
5. Broadband labels is a must for improving customer awareness regarding broadband Quality of Experience (QoE) and associated tariff impacts.

#### **Panel Discussion I: Broadband - Technology, Quality of Service & Regulations**

##### **Panelists**

- Prof. V. Sridhar, IIIT-B
- Rajavelsamy, Samsung Networks
- Dr. Kanwar Jit Singh, Tejas Networks
- Ezhil Buddhan, BSNL
- Rahul Lohani, Phimetrics Technologies

*Following were discussed by the speakers:*

1. Need for third party measurement of network data and associated QoS metrics;

2. Need for Indian context aware apps especially taking in to consideration power and memory of end user devices, network congestion, spectrum shortage and range limitations of access networks and backhaul bandwidth constraints;
3. Need certification of apps for Indian context so that app builders are aware of limitations and constraints of Indian networks while building apps and optimizing the same; need to remove app related bottlenecks; enable “frugal development” of apps;
4. Need for “dynamic labels” since network conditions change depending on time and space;
5. End-to-end guarantee of QoE is difficult; the entities in the telecom value chain including ISPs, App builders, device manufacturers, backhaul providers, content delivery networks all need to take responsibility; regulation should enable all to take responsibility and provide the required QoE;

*Following issues and comments were raised by the audience:*

1. Users are informed only after the consumption of their data quota; need proactive advise to the users on how much quota is remaining;
2. Need a simple “soft Tachometer” that provides information to the user on data availability dynamically;
3. Need to conduct social audits to measure the QoE of users; relying on ISP provided information alone is not sufficient for proper enforcement;
4. Consumers as individuals are often ignorant and not able to provide their inputs effectively to TRAI; TRAI needs to actively involve consumer advocacy groups and associated forums to elicit inputs for appropriate regulatory measures.

## **Panel Discussion II: Relevance of Information Disclosure in Broadband Services**

### **Panelists**

- S. Saroja, CAG
- Dr. Subhashis Gupta, IIM-Bangalore
- Rajesh C, Cisco
- Dr. Preeti Mudliar, IIIT-B
- Mahesh Uppal, COMFIRST

*Following were discussed by the speakers:*

1. For consumer awareness, representation of information as “symbols” is a natural way, cutting across language barriers;
2. Consumers are very much “aware” of various tariff plans, the complexity of how much of data to consume and when; and also are quality conscious; hence it is very important to take inputs from across varied customer base while deciding on the details of broadband labels;
3. Consumers are “willing to pay” for QoS; this needs to be included in the label design;
4. The labels should be simple and contain “basic information” on QoE and tariff;
5. Enterprises always had strict QoS requirements and carriers always provide them with suitable plans; need to extend it to B2C market;
6. Enforcement is a serious challenge; penalty for infringement and non-adherence is to be included in the regulation;

7. There is information asymmetry between service provider and consumer; hence it initiates “adverse selection” and “moral hazard” problems; one way to solve is through warranties and guarantees enforced through labels; certification of advertised rates and tariff by government regulator or a third party entity;
8. Labeling for services such as telecom/ broadband is different from label for products such as white goods; service levels are dynamic and vary; hence the need for “dynamic labels”;
9. Consumer behavior for telecom/ broadband services change and consumption pattern also changes both in time and space; hence the labels need to somehow incorporate these;

*Following issues and comments were raised by the audience:*

1. Consumer redressal is very weak in telecom; individual consumer is not powerful enough and also lacks adequate resources to fight against the mammoth ISPs and telcos; regulator shall interact closely with consumer organizations for dispute and redressal settlement;
2. Possible to automatically collect data from handset on usage and use this crowd sourced data for enacting QoS regulation; may need standard organizations such as Telecommunications Standard Development Society India (TSDSI) to come up a standard data capture app to be pre-installed in handsets sold in India as a regulatory condition for crowdsourcing data for analytics and measurement; need to address the associated privacy and data protection challenges;

CUTS presented the draft broadband label format and invited comments on the same. Following are the distinct comments:

1. The labels should have the following characteristics:
  - i. It should be dynamic;
  - ii. Should be Simple and easily understandable;
  - iii. Should be Symbolic;
  - iv. Suitable to address different user types and applications used;
  - v. Apart from visual cues, may need voice enabled labels for improving accessibility to visually impaired;
  - vi. Should contain parameters on “minimum guarantees” such as downlink speed; additional information shall be present on need basis;