

Sometimes greatness is indeed thrust upon one and, whilst not entirely sure why, though perhaps it has something to do with the never-shrinking waistline, it seems a consensus of opinion amongst those in the RGBB (who should know better) determined that I would fit the then vacant Chair of the COMMIT group. Now then, COMMIT is indeed fortunate to be composed of those interested not only in the finer points of living that RGBB membership brings but also in nurturing a better environment in which to do business – something which we all subscribe to.

Of the challenges all RGBB members and, especially, COMMIT face in doing business in the Kingdom one of the more significant is the steadily increasing rate of change as the Kingdom moves towards compliance with the WTO accords. Change can, however, present new market opportunities and the establishment of the Kingdom's regulatory environment for telecommunications will, hopefully,

also lead to greater competition and liberalisation in the market place to the benefit of the wider business community.

Competition elsewhere in the CommIT world has thrived on liberalisation - to the benefit of the end-user customer. Important, first steps have already brought limited competition to Saudi Arabia for Internet service and more recently for VSAT connectivity. Further competition is now scheduled for introduction in 2004 for data and mobile communications and with it opportunities for real growth into new and exciting areas for our business.

In the challenging and changing environment of Saudi Arabia, CCOMMIT members indeed have much to look forward to. As Chairman I look forward to working with all in the group and wish each of us every success in the realisation of these soon-to-be emerging opportunities.

WHAT'S NEW IN THE COMMIT ARENA



Peter Ashton
SIG Chairman

Nokia claims first with 'walkie-talkie' GSM phone

Nokia has unveiled its first handset with a "walkie-talkie" or "push-to-talk" feature at its Mobility Conference in New York, claiming it was the first mobile phone manufacturer to offer such a phone based on GSM technology.

The push-to-talk feature allows users to connect quickly with another person or a group of people by pressing a side-mounted key and speaking into the phone.



The Nokia 5140 phone also features a dust, bump and splash-resistant housing, as well as an integrated digital compass which displays directions both graphically and numerically. A built-in flashlight helps guide the way, and for fitness enthusiasts, a new Fitness Coach feature uses training regimens based on professionally recommended training principles.

In Asia and Europe, the 5140 will operate in the 900, 1800 and 1900 frequencies and support GSM, GPRS and Edge (Enhanced Data Rates for GSM Evolution) network technologies. In the Americas, the phone will operate in the 850, 1800 and 1900 frequencies and support the same Asian and European network technologies.

Both versions are expected to be available in the second half of 2004. The phone will cost between \$150 and \$200 in the US. Prices for Asia and Europe were not immediately available. During 2004, Nokia will introduce a full range of push-to-talk GSM phones, including smart phones based on the Symbian operating system. From 2005, Nokia intends to offer push-to-talk phones based on GPRS and the new third-generation Wideband Code Division Multiple Access technology.



In case any reader was wondering what Paul Brown, the previous SIG Chairman was getting up to these days, you can see he's got his hands full with a new addition to the family. Amelie was born on 29th Sept 2003. Mother & baby are doing well and I suspect proud Grandparents have a few more piccies easily to hand!