

5G Starting Line is Hotting Up...in the USA

USA CSPs are striding forward towards the 5G finishing line, with Asia plodding steadily behind, yet Europe is stumbling at the back of the pack. With the USA so far ahead, have they overlooked network performance? And is Europe waiting to learn the lessons (and failings) of the leaders or just slow to uptake?

5G Starting Line

CSPs in the USA are posed, ready at the starting line, having completed a full program of warm up exercises and got the fans cheering on their feet. CSPs have a clear goal in mind and have made efficient progress in getting to this point. With a roadmap in place, it is expected services will start in late 2018.

So why is the rest of the world behind? Asia is middle of the pack, making steady progress in 5G trials and has access to a potentially huge market. The GSMA has predicted that this will be the largest 5G region by 2025.

Yet, Europe has been sluggish when it comes to 5G. The region as a whole does not have the level of excitement or commitment that is reflected overseas. European Union regulation has limited 5G opportunities and the continent struggles with valuable R&D progress.

With Europe still cautiously testing and creating business cases, CSPs have not yet identified clear monetization models. There is still a lot to do for European CSPs to bring 5G services to market, including investment into the network infrastructure.

Network Preparations

To be able to offer 5G services, CSPs must provision for this technology. Gaining visibility of their network estate will be essential to manage the huge complexity challenges that 5G will bring. A robust visualization platform must be implemented to effectively monitor performance delivery for the millions of connections.

USA CSPs must bring together legacy and new 5G systems to be monitored in one interface before they will be able to effectively deliver 5G. This will be

essential to manage the levels of complexity that CSPs will face – no matter which continent you are in.

The USA is certainly ahead of the 5G curve pushed by a keen market. The US National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) research of 2017 found that more households have a mobile data plan than wired broadband and tablets are now more popular than desktop computers.

As the excitement about the benefits of 5G become widespread, alongside the uptake of services that offers increased levels of mobility and flexibility, Europe might have a last-minute surge to try and catch up some lost ground. Yet, at the head of the pack or at the back, the monetisation winners will be the ones that carefully implement performance and effective system management.

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