

Who's top dog?

The 40 Most Influential People in Telecommunications in 2009

The famous Chinese curse “may you live in interesting times” has never seemed more apt for ICT in New Zealand.

Telecommunications is not so much evolving as undergoing a radical makeover – from a ubiquitous copper network to a fibre-to-the-home network. It is a multi-billion dollar investment that will change business models and the way content is delivered for several generations to come.

In addition, we are likely to see more WiMAX deployments in the upcoming year, which will enable smaller telcos such as Compass Communications and CallPlus to finally own infrastructure and bypass the copper network in order to provide their customers with voice and data services.

On the mobile front, now that Telecom and Vodafone are competing on the same technology platform, they will be looking ahead to the next advance: Long Term Evolution (LTE). This will require more investment dollars, but to ignore the upgrade could see both telcos left behind as users embrace the convenience of mobile data.

Meanwhile, newcomer 2degrees is nipping at their heels, stealing

their low-end customers and challenging other revenue sources such as roaming fees paid by international telcos and mobile termination rates (MTRs).

MTRs continue to dominate the regulatory agenda, while reform of the Telecommunication Service Obligation (or KiwiShare) is well overdue and likely to be finally tackled in the upcoming year.

If the telcos and the government, the technologists and the lawyers can sort out the infrastructure, the focus might finally shift to major users in business, health and education, who can then take advantage of the high-speed connectivity for the benefit of all New Zealanders.

Judging criteria

The panel defined what makes a person influential in telecommunications by the following three criteria:

- Is the person influential?
- Do they have the ability – and willingness – to use that influence to enact change?
- Are they willing to stand up and be counted? ■

Judging Panel



Michael Foley *Voco Director*

Michael Foley is the founder of telecommunications consultancy Voco. He has more than 25 years' experience in business information management as a customer, supplier and consultant. Foley is also an elected Councillor of Internet NZ, a Director of the Domain Name Commission and Vice Chairman of TUANZ.



Geoff Lawrie *Cisco Systems Country Manager*

Prior to his role as head of Cisco Systems in New Zealand, Geoff Lawrie was Managing Director of GDC Communications Ltd, a telecommunications and IT services company. Before that he was the MD of Microsoft's operations in New Zealand for several years. He is currently the Chair of NZICT.



Rob Spray *Telecommunications Industry Group Chief Executive*

Rob Spray is the first CEO of the newly formed Telecommunications Industry Group (TIG). His past roles include Managing Director of Nortel New Zealand, Leading Channels and Partners for Nortel Asia and Management roles in NZ, UK, Europe and Asia in Telecommunications over the last 25 years.



Doug Wilson *Automobile Association Chief Information Officer*

An ICT industry veteran, Doug Wilson began his career at Massey and Waikato Universities, helping to set up their initial information systems. In the early 1980s he joined Wang (now Gen-i), where he held a number of roles, including CEO. Doug has also been CEO of Gateway and has held senior roles at Microsoft and EDS. In addition to his current role as AA CIO, he sits on the board of its GeoSmart subsidiary and has been involved in delivering traffic management information via mobile devices. He is also a TUANZ board member.

1 STEVEN JOYCE*Minister of Communications and Information*

National came to government with a promise to invest in the country's infrastructure and Steven Joyce is their man to deliver it. Clearly a major player in cabinet, he's also responsible for Transport and has a say in both the Finance and Infrastructure portfolios. He has proven commercial and negotiation skills as a self-made millionaire in the fractious and ego-driven world of radio. He'll need all those skills to push through the ultra-fast broadband plan and to tackle regulatory reforms such as Mobile Termination Rates and the TSO.

**2 PAUL REYNOLDS***Telecom Chief Executive*

The charismatic Scotsman from BT has been in the role over two years and he's transformed the public face of the country's biggest telco. He's presided over Telecom's operational separation, launched an entirely new WCDMA mobile network and ploughed millions into upgrading the copper network, but his toughest task is ahead of him – ensuring Telecom's future in the government's scheme to bring fibre-enabled broadband to 75% of New Zealanders. With 57% of the broadband customers in the country, he has a hefty bargaining chip.

**3 RALPH CHIVERS***Manager - Broadband Investment Plan*

Having proven his mettle as Chief Executive of the Telecommunication Carriers Forum, Ralph Chivers tackled one of the most interesting jobs in telco this year. Tasked with transforming the March cabinet paper into a workable document, the final plan charts a careful middle path between a national solution and a regionally based approach. Will this consummate bureaucrat be rewarded with the chief executive position of Crown Fibre Holdings, the company formed to enact the plan? Does he want the job?

**4 ERNIE NEWMAN***TUANZ Chief Executive*

He's held the post for 10 years, but the TUANZ CEO shows no sign of leaving the telco arena. And why should he? The media go-to man; he's an articulate champion for both the business and residential user. Representing around 500 business users, TUANZ continues to wield influence - its dogged determination to see mobile termination rates regulated appears to finally be paying off. All though forced by the recession to curb its events programme, this hasn't affected TUANZ's - or its chief's - public profile.

**5 JOHN KEY***New Zealand Prime Minister*

Never before has a Prime Minister taken such an active interest in telecommunications. National's broadband policy has been closely associated with the Key government. He's been known to visit innovative broadband rollouts and his comments about rural connectivity recently ensured that the needs of rural users became a greater priority. It's clear he intends to make better broadband a part of his political legacy and, as a self-made millionaire, he's put one of his own kind in charge by giving Steven Joyce the ICT portfolio.

**6 RICK ELLIS***TVNZ Chief Executive*

The broadband revolution will be driven by content and as the boss of TVNZ, Rick Ellis is well placed to lead the charge towards the digital future. Under his stewardship TVNZ took a 33% stake in Hybrid TV, the company that delivers TiVo to Australasia, and which has signed an exclusive deal with Telecom. He's ahead of the pack in terms of understanding how to make a business case in the convergent world of broadcasting and telecommunications.

**7 MATT CROCKETT***Telecom Wholesale, Chief Executive*

A star performer in Telecom, as the head of its wholesale division he's shouldered much of the burden in carrying out the separation undertakings. Admired throughout the industry, an otherwise flawless record was blotted recently when Telecom's Independent Oversight Group decided that Wholesale's loyalty discounts ran counter to the undertakings. In addition to Wholesale, Crockett presides over Telecom International, and he occupies a seat on the board of the Southern Cross Cable.

**8 SIMON MACKENZIE***Vector Chief Executive*

The boss of Vector has long harboured ambitions in telecommunications. Vector's fibre network in Auckland provides backhaul for Vodafone and its North Shore fibre network (NEAL) is an example of how a private partnership might work at a regional level. NEAL also serves as a warning, as the majority of the connected schools have failed to take advantage of fibre connectivity. Even so, Vector leads a strong coalition of lines companies with a national footprint, making it a serious contender to carry out the government's broadband plan.

**9 WAYNE BOYD***Telecom Chairman*

He took over from Roderick Deane three years ago promising transparency, honesty and transformation, and he's delivered on all three. Wayne Boyd is the backroom chairman who quietly gets stuff done. Happy to let Paul Reynolds and his executive team front to the public, he nevertheless has an active involvement in Telecom's strategic direction. His humble manner and disarming niceness belie a sharp, shrewd mind.

**10 ERIC HERTZ***2degrees Chief Executive*

Taking over the helm at 2degrees within mere days of it launching was a baptism of fire for the former mobile applications executive from Seattle. After a stunning pre-launch marketing campaign, a website malfunction shut down for over a week the vital sections which enabled customers to port their numbers and top up their SIM cards. The next year will be tough as the company proves it can hack it in the long haul.



11 RUSSELL STANNERS*Vodafone Chief Executive*

As the boss of the incumbent telco in the mobile market, he faces tough competition from new entrants. Vodafone's halo has slipped in recent times as stoushes with other market participants have moved perception of 'big red' from industry darling to bad boy. Can he pull them back into favour?

**12 ROSS PATTERSON***Telecommunications Commissioner*

After almost a year's leave of absence Ross Patterson has come back to the position with his trademark gusto. He's got a full workload ahead with TSO, Telecom's separation and possible reform of the numbering plan, to name three.

**13 MURRAY JURGELEIT***FX Networks Chief Executive*

With the country's third largest national fibre backhaul network, FX Networks is poised to take advantage of the government's broadband plan. Its strong ties with regional players such as CityLink in Wellington and InspireNet in Manawatu/Taranaki make it a politically appealing telco.

**14 DAVID THODEY***Telstra Chief Executive*

With all that Telstra's new boss has to contend with in Australia, it's not clear if he will have time to take an interest in business on this side of the Tasman. But if he does make changes to TelstraClear it will have a significant impact on the New Zealand telecommunications scene.

**15 BILL ENGLISH***Deputy Prime Minister*

He's in charge of the country's finances and he's thought by many to be a broadband-skeptic. As such the Minister of Finance has the power to slow down any broadband upgrade. He may have had to set aside \$1.5 billion, but with a 10-year timetable he could be unwilling to spend it too soon.

**16 MARK RATCLIFFE***Chorus Chief Executive*

Mark Ratcliffe currently faces a stoush with the union over the Visionstream contract which has the potential to drag on, poisoning the good reputation Chorus has acquired in the short time it's been in existence. The big question is, will he be allowed to lead Chorus to a fibre-to-the-home deployment?

**17 GEOFF HUNT***Kordia Chief Executive*

With Geoff Hunt at the helm, Kordia has been on an ambitious acquisition programme, which shows no sign of slowing if the board approves the \$170-200 million plan to build a cable linking New Zealand with Australia. Watch for Kordia to make a play for rural and regional broadband.

**18 MALCOLM DICK***CallPlus Co-owner and Chief Executive*

Taking up the Chief Executive's role once again, he leads CallPlus/Slingshot at an interesting time. It has a strong VoIP product, has just become an MVNO on Vodafone's network, and is poised to deploy a nationwide WiMAX network. With 150,000 customers it's one of the top five telcos.

**19 MURRAY MILNER***Milner Consulting*

Telecom's former CTO has become an influential consultant to first the Labour and now National governments. His report to Treasury this year put the cost to roll out a fibre network at around \$6 billion, and it's likely he'll be called upon to do the sums again as Treasury keeps a close watch.

**20 ROD DRURY***Xero Chief Executive*

This serial entrepreneur has the ear of the telcos and the Government. His power as an influencer is enhanced by the fact he has created in Xero a product that embodies the weightless economy. He's also a loud proponent of another international cable to rival Southern Cross.

**21 ROSALIE NELSON***IDC Research Manager, Telecommunications*

An articulate speaker, she has become a fixture at telecommunication conferences as well as a media go-to person. In the words of one panellist she is a "ballys commentator" who is able to turn complex research into concise sound bites that add to the public's understanding of telco issues.

**22 CONOR ENGLISH***Federated Farmers Chief Executive*

Federated Farmers is shaping up to be a lobbying force in telecommunications with new Chief Executive Conor English, brother of the Minister of Finance, at the helm. The organisation's open support of the Drop-The-Rate campaign surprised many. What will his organisation do next?

**23 BRUCE PARKES***MED Deputy Secretary*

Formerly Telecom's head of government relations, he's the poacher-turned-gamekeeper. His experience will be useful in bringing the incumbent telco into line. His tenure on the board of Team Talk gives him first-hand knowledge of how gutsy challengers like CityLink operate.

**24 SUSIE STONE***Kordia GM, Corporate Affairs*

Susie Stone is spearheading the campaign to build Kordia's international cable. If she can pull it off, it will be quite an upset in the market. In addition Stone is a strong advocate for Tier two and three telcos on the board of the Telecommunications Carriers Forum.



25 **ALLAN FREETH**
TelstraClear Chief Executive

He runs the second largest fixed line telco, but Allan Freeth languishes in 25th place. His see-sawing over which mobile network operator to pick, focus on upgrading a high-speed cable that few can access, and grumpy reaction to the government's broadband plan left the panel unimpressed.



26 **JOHN FELLET**
SkyTV Chief Executive

Along with TVNZ, SKY TV is expected to drive broadband uptake by providing the content for the delivery of digital content. But the recent withdrawal of SKY TV's online offering shows that it currently has little faith in current broadband networks. Dominant in the paid TV market, John Fellet faces a big threat from TiVo in the coming year.

27 **DAVID WARE**
Team Talk Managing Director

Telcos are a rare sight on the NZX, but Team Talk is a robust publicly listed company. The decision to diversify from mobile radio into telecommunications through the acquisition of CityLink is paying off. His willingness to take a stand on issues has earned him the respect of the telco community.



28 **PAUL CLARKIN**
WorldxChange co-owner and director

With his team of ex-army radio engineers he's creating innovative services for fibre networks that are currently being deployed in Telecom's greenfield fibre-to-the-home deployments. This will set his company up to take advantage of FTTH deployments - whoever builds them.



29 **TONY BAIRD**
BayCity Chief Executive

With 10,000 customers on the IPSTAR satellite and the rural ISP Farmside, his company BayCity is well placed to take advantage of the government's increase in rural spending. He's got the backing of Vodafone, who are using his satellite option to show there are viable alternatives to the TSO.



30 **TEX EDWARDS**
2degrees founder

It took him nine years, but Tex Edwards was finally able to be part of the launch of the country's third mobile network. Tireless on the regulatory front, he's been instrumental in pushing for the regulation of mobile termination rates.



31 **JAMIE BADDELEY**
FX Networks General Manager Sales

The former president of ISPANZ, Jamie Baddeley is fast becoming an influential figure in internet politics. As Vice President of Internet NZ he will steer the strategic direction of an organisation flush with cash from the country's domain name fees.



32 **JULIA RAUE**
Air New Zealand CIO

She led the team that boosted Air New Zealand's online sales revenue to \$1 billion in a year. She topped this by creating the electronic booking system which means most domestic passengers can now bypass long queues and go directly to the departure lounge. Justly awarded and recognised.



33 **RICHARD WESTLAKE**
Telecommunications Carriers Forum Chair

As independent chair of the TCF, Richard Westlake has built on the good work done by his predecessor to ensure the telcos work together to provide industry solutions to complex regulatory issues. Copyright amendment and the IP interconnection code are high on the Forum's worklist.



34 **CHRIS O'CONNELL**
TUANZ Chairman Radar Guidance director

As Chairman of TUANZ, Chris O'Connell leads an organisation at a crossroads – now almost solely reliant on membership fees for its funding, it must work hard to represent the interests of its corporate members while at the same time being an advocate for all users if it is to remain influential.



35 **OSMOND BORTHWICK**
Commerce Commission Director

Osmond Borthwick leads the team that takes care of the nuts and bolts of every regulatory decision made by the Commission regarding telecommunications. He's been with the Commission eight years and he's yet to put a foot wrong.



36 **NEIL DE WIT**
CityLink Chief Executive

CityLink has long been the darling of the fibre evangelists, its Public LAN broadband network and its CafeNet WiFi services leaders in technology. Neil de Wit's strong networking skills have contributed to the telco's good name. How will CityLink fare in the growing field of new fibre players?



37 **PETER HILLS**
Director of Virtual Education Network

He set up VEN in 2001 to provide standards, governance and management for ICT in New Zealand education. Since then he has played a key role in developing collaboration, communication and community initiatives among the hundreds of schools that are VEN members.



38 **CHRIS QUIN**
Gen-i Chief Executive

Chris Quin failed to get the backing of the panel: "Gen-i's success has been largely by default. Quin now needs to focus on revamping Gen-i to be a slick future-focused services engine leveraging the developing infrastructure layer to drive the industry forward," said one panellist.



39 MARK FORD

Head of AKL Super City transition agency

The former Watercare Chief Executive and Auckland Regional Transport Authority Chair will oversee the transition to the new governance structure for the Auckland Super City. As such he'll be creating a model for shared services that could be a template for other sectors.

40 FRANK MOUNT

Telecom Chief Transformation Officer

One of Paul Reynolds' high-profile imports to his executive team, Frank Mount is the softly spoken American with degrees in science, classical studies and mathematics. He has an international contacts list and has used his influence to generate stronger links between Telecom and global telcos.



Ones to watch

in alphabetical order

Michael Boggs	TelstraClear Chief Financial Officer
Brendon Boyle	Department of Internal Affairs Chief Executive
Rick Boven	New Zealand Institute Director
CIO	Auckland Super City
Steve Fuller	Enable Networks Chief Executive
Alan Gourdie	Telecom Retail Chief Executive
Robin Hartendorp	Datacraft Chief Executive
Karim Hussona	Compass Chief Executive
Mark Rushworth	Vodafone Director Marketing
Rob Spray	Telecommunications Industry Group Chief Executive

* Rob Spray was not present for the discussion about this list.

Top Ten in 2007

David Cunliffe	former Minister of Communications
Russell Stanners	CEO Vodafone NZ
Douglas Webb	former Telecommunications Commissioner
Theresa Gattung	former CEO Telecom NZ
Marko Bogoeievski	former CFO Telecom NZ
Trevor Mallard	former Minister of Economic Development
Ernie Newman	CEO TUANZ
Allan Freeth	CEO TelstraClear
Simon Moutter	former COO Telecom NZ
Mark Ratcliffe	CIO Telecom NZ (now CEO of Chorus)

** The Top 40 wasn't run in 2008

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Congratulations to the top 40 who are doing the same. **FXnetworks**