3G

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3G is the **third generation** of mobile phone standards and technology, superseding 2G, and preceding 4G. It is based on the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) family of standards under the International Mobile Telecommunications programme, IMT-2000.

3G technologies enable network operators to offer users a wider range of more advanced services while achieving greater network capacity through improved spectral efficiency. Services include wide-area wireless voice telephony, video calls, and broadband wireless data, all in a mobile environment. Additional features also include HSPA data transmission capabilities able to deliver speeds up to 14.4Mbit/s on the downlink and 5.8Mbit/s on the uplink.

Unlike IEEE 802.11 (common names Wi-Fi or WLAN) networks, 3G networks are *wide area cellular telephone networks* which evolved to incorporate high-speed internet access and video telephony. IEEE 802.11 networks are short range, high-bandwidth networks primarily developed for data.

Contents

Mobile communication standards

GSM / UMTS (3GPP) Family

GSM (2G)

- GPRS
- EDGE (EGPRS)
  - EDGE Evolution
- CSD
  - HSCSD

UMTS (**3G**)

- HSPA
  - HSDPA
  - HSUPA
  - HSPA+
- UMTS-TDD
  - TD-CDMA
  - TD-SCDMA
- FOMA

3GPP Rel. 8 (Pre-4G)

- E-UTRA

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cdmaOne / CDMA2000 (3GPP2) Family

cdmaOne (2G)

CDMA2000 (**3G**)

- EV-DO

UMB (Pre-4G)

AMPS Family

AMPS (1G)

- TACS / ETACS

D-AMPS (2G)

Other Technologies

Pre Cellular

Implementation and history

The first pre-commercial 3G network was launched by NTT DoCoMo in Japan branded FOMA, in May 2001 on a pre-release of W-CDMA-GA3Y technology. The first commercial launch of 3G was also by NTT DoCoMo in Japan on October 1, 2001. The second network to go commercially live was by SK Telecom in South Korea on the CDMA2000 1xEV-DO technology in January 2002. By May 2002 the second South Korean 3G network was launched by KTF on EV-DO and thus the Koreans were the first to see competition among 3G operators.

The first European pre-commercial network was at the Isle of Man by Manx Telecom, the operator owned by British Telecom, and the first commercial network in Europe was opened for business by Telenor in December 2001 with no commercial handsets and thus no paying customers. These were both on the W-CDMA technology.

The first commercial United States 3G network was by Monet Mobile Networks, on CDMA2000 1x EV-DO technology, but this network provider later shut down operations. The second 3G network operator in the USA was Verizon in October 2003 also on CDMA2000 1x EV-DO, and this network has grown strongly since then.

The first pre-commercial demonstration network in the southern hemisphere was built in Adelaide, South Australia by m.Net Corporation in February 2002 using UMTS on 2100 MHz. This was a demonstration network for the 2002 IT World Congress. The first commercial 3G network was launched by Hutchison Telecommunications branded as *Three* in April 2003. Australia's largest and fastest 3G UMTS/HSDPA network was launched by Telstra branded as "*NextG(tm)*" on the 850 MHz band in October 2006, intended as a replacement of their cdmaOne network Australia wide.

In December 2007, 190 3G networks were operating in 40 countries and 154 HSDPA networks were operating in 71 countries, according to the Global mobile Suppliers Association. In Asia, Europe, Canada and the USA, telecommunication companies use W-CDMA technology with the support of around 100 terminal designs to operate 3G mobile networks.

In Europe, mass market commercial 3G services were introduced starting in March 2003 by 3 (Part of Hutchison Whampoa) in the UK and Italy. The European Union Council suggested that the 3G operators should cover 80% of the European national populations by the end of 2005.

Roll-out of 3G networks was delayed in some countries by the enormous costs of additional spectrum licensing fees. (See Telecoms crash.) In many countries, 3G networks do not use the same radio frequencies as 2G, so mobile operators must build entirely new networks and license

- PTT
- MTS
- IMTS
- AMTS
- OLT
- MTD
- Autotel / PALM
- ARP

1G

- NMT
- Hicap
- CDPD
- Mobitex
- DataTAC

2G

- iDEN
- PDC
- CSD
- PHS
- WiDEN

Pre-4G

- iBurst
- HIPERMAN
- WiMAX
- WiBro
- GAN (UMA)

Channel Access Methods

- FDMA
  - OFDMA
- TDMA
- SSMA
  - CDMA

Frequency bands

- Cellular
  - GSM
  - UMTS
  - PCS
- SMR

entirely new frequencies; an exception is the United States where carriers operate 3G service in the same frequencies as other services. The license fees in some European countries were particularly high, bolstered by government auctions of a limited number of licenses and sealed bid auctions, and initial excitement over 3G's potential. Other delays were due to the expenses of upgrading equipment for the new systems.

By June 2007 the 200 millionth 3G subscriber had been connected. Out of 3 billion mobile phone subscriptions worldwide this is only 6.7%. In the countries where 3G was launched first - Japan and South Korea - over half of all subscribers use 3G. In Europe the leading country is Italy with a third of its subscribers migrated to 3G. Other leading countries by 3G migration include UK, Austria, Australia and Singapore at the 20% migration level. A confusing statistic is counting CDMA 2000 1x RTT customers as if they were 3G customers. If using this oft-disputed definition, then the total 3G subscriber base would be 475 million at June 2007 and 15.8% of all subscribers worldwide.

Still several major countries such as Turkey, China, Indonesia, etc have not awarded 3G licenses and customers await 3G services. China has been delaying its decisions on 3G for many years, partly hoping to have the Chinese 3G standard, TD-SCDMA, to mature for commercial production.

China announced in May 2008, that the telecoms sector was re-organized and three 3G networks would be allocated so that the largest mobile operator, China Mobile, would retain its GSM customer base and launch 3G onto the Chinese standard, TD-SCDMA. China Unicom would retain its GSM customer base but relinquish its CDMA2000 customer base, and launch 3G on the globally leading WCDMA (UMTS) standard. The CDMA2000 customers of China Unicom would go to China Telecom, which would then launch 3G on the CDMA 1x EV-DO standard. This means that China will have all three main cellular technology 3G standards in commercial use.

The first African use of 3G technology was a 3G videocall made in Johannesburg on the Vodacom network in November 2004. The first commercial launch of 3G in Africa was by EMTEL in Mauritius on the W-CDMA standard. In north African Morocco in late March 2006, a 3G service was provided by the new company Wana.

Rogers Wireless began implementing 3G HSDPA services in eastern Canada early 2007 in the form of Rogers Vision; expansion into western Canada is expected soon.

Phones and networks

3G technologies enable network operators to offer users a wider range of more advanced services while achieving greater network capacity through improved spectral efficiency.

UMTS terminals

The technical complexities of a 3G phone or handset depends on its need to roam onto legacy 2G networks. In the first countries, Japan and South Korea, there was no need to include roaming capabilities to older networks such as GSM, so 3G phones were small and lightweight. In Europe and America, the manufacturers and network operators wanted multi-mode 3G phones which would operate on 3G and 2G networks (e.g., W-CDMA and GSM), which added to the complexity, size, weight, and cost of the handset. As a result, early European W-CDMA phones were significantly larger and heavier than comparable Japanese W-CDMA phones.

Japan's Vodafone KK experienced a great deal of trouble with these differences when its UK-based parent,

Vodafone, insisted the Japanese subsidiary use standard Vodafone handsets. Japanese customers who were accustomed to smaller handsets were suddenly required to switch to European handsets that were much bulkier and considered unfashionable by Japanese consumers. During this conversion, Vodafone KK lost 6 customers for every 4 that migrated to 3G. Soon thereafter, Vodafone sold the subsidiary (now known as SoftBank Mobile).

The general trend to smaller and smaller phones seems to have paused, perhaps even turned, with the capability of large-screen phones to provide more video, gaming and internet use on the 3G networks.k

Speed

The ITU has not provided a clear definition of the speeds users can expect from 3G equipment or providers. Thus users sold 3G service may not be able to point to a standard and say that the speeds it specifies are not being met. While stating in commentary that "it is expected that IMT-2000 will provide higher transmission rates: a minimum speed of 2Mbit/s for stationary or walking users, and 348 [sic] kbit/s in a moving vehicle,"[1] the ITU does not actually clearly specify minimum or average speeds or what modes of the interfaces qualify as 3G, so various speeds are sold as 3G intended to meet customers expectations of broadband speed. It is often suggested by industry sources that 3G can be expected to provide 384 kbit/s at or below pedestrian speeds, but only 128 kbit/s in a moving car. While EDGE is part of the 3G standard, some phones report EDGE and 3G network availability as separate things, notably the iPhone.

Network standardization

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) defined the demands for 3G mobile networks with the IMT-2000 standard. An organization called 3rd Generation Partnership Project (3GPP) has continued that work by defining a mobile system that fulfills the IMT-2000 standard. This system is called Universal Mobile Telecommunications System (UMTS).

IMT-2000 standards and radio interfaces

International Telecommunications Union (ITU): IMT-2000 consists of six radio interfaces

- W-CDMA also known as UMTS
- CDMA2000
- TD-CDMA / TD-SCDMA
- UWC (often implemented with EDGE)
- DECT
- Mobile WiMAX[2]

Advantages of a layered network architecture

Unlike GSM, UMTS is based on layered services. At the top is the services layer, which provides fast deployment of services and centralized location. In the middle is the control layer, which helps upgrading procedures and allows the capacity of the network to be dynamically allocated. At the bottom is the connectivity layer where any transmission technology can be used and the voice traffic will transfer over ATM/AAL2 or IP/RTP.

3G evolution (pre-4G)

See also section Pre-4G wireless standards of the 4G article.

The standardization of 3G evolution is working in both 3GPP and 3GPP2. The corresponding specifications of 3GPP and 3GPP2 evolutions are named as LTE and UMB, respectively. 3G evolution uses partly beyond 3G technologies to enhance the performance and to make a smooth migration path.

There are several different paths from 2G to 3G. In Europe the main path starts from GSM when GPRS is added to a system. From this point it is possible to go to the UMTS system. In North America the system evolution will start from Time division multiple access (TDMA), change to Enhanced Data Rates for GSM Evolution (EDGE) and then to UMTS.

In Japan, two 3G standards are used: W-CDMA used by NTT DoCoMo (FOMA, compatible with UMTS) and SoftBank Mobile (UMTS), and CDMA2000, used by KDDI. Transition to 3G was completed in Japan in 2006.

Evolution from 2G to 3G

2G networks were built mainly for voice data and slow transmission. Due to rapid changes in user expectation, they do not meet today's wireless needs.

Cellular mobile telecommunications networks are being upgraded to use 3G technologies from 1999 to 2010. Japan was the first country to introduce 3G nationally, and in Japan the transition to 3G was largely completed in 2006. Korea then adopted 3G Networks soon after and the transition was made as early as 2004.

From 2G to 2.5G (GPRS)

"2.5G" (and even 2.75G) are technologies such as i-mode data services, camera phones, high-speed circuit-switched data (HSCSD) and General packet radio service (GPRS) that provide some functionality domains like 3G networks, but without the full transition to 3G network. They were built to introduce the possibilities of wireless application technology to the end consumers, and so increase demand for 3G services.

When converting a GSM network to a UMTS network, the first new technology is General Packet Radio Service (GPRS). It is the trigger to 3G services. The network connection is always on, so the subscriber is online all the time. From the operator's point of view, it is important that GPRS investments are re-used when going to UMTS. Also capitalizing on GPRS business experience is very important.

From GPRS, operators could change the network directly to UMTS, or invest in an EDGE system. One advantage of EDGE over UMTS is that it requires no new licenses. The frequencies are also re-used and no new antennas are needed.

Migrating from GPRS to UMTS

From GPRS network, the following network elements can be reused:

- Home location register (HLR)
- Visitor location register (VLR)

- Equipment identity register (EIR)
- Mobile switching centre (MSC) (vendor dependent)
- Authentication centre (AUC)
- Serving GPRS Support Node (SGSN) (vendor dependent)
- Gateway GPRS Support Node (GGSN)

From Global Service for Mobile (GSM) communication radio network, the following elements cannot be reused

- Base station controller (BSC)
- Base transceiver station (BTS)

They can remain in the network and be used in dual network operation where 2G and 3G networks co-exist while network migration and new 3G terminals become available for use in the network.

The UMTS network introduces new network elements that function as specified by 3GPP:

- Node B (base station)
- Radio Network Controller (RNC)
- Media Gateway (MGW)

The functionality of MSC and SGSN changes when going to UMTS. In a GSM system the MSC handles all the circuit switched operations like connecting A- and B-subscriber through the network. SGSN handles all the packet switched operations and transfers all the data in the network. In UMTS the Media gateway (MGW) take care of all data transfer in both circuit and packet switched networks. MSC and SGSN control MGW operations. The nodes are renamed to MSC-server and GSN-server.

Security

3G networks offer a greater degree of security than 2G predecessors. By allowing the UE to authenticate the network it is attaching to, the user can be sure the network is the intended one and not an impersonator. 3G networks use the KASUMI block crypto instead of the older A5/1 stream cipher. However, a number of serious weaknesses in the KASUMI cipher have been identified.

In addition to the 3G network infrastructure security, end to end security is offered when application frameworks such as IMS are accessed, although this is not strictly a 3G property.

Issues

Although 3G was successfully introduced to users across the world, some issues are debated by 3G providers and users:

- Expensive input fees for the 3G service licenses
- Numerous differences in the licensing terms
- Large amount of debt currently sustained by many telecommunication companies, which makes it a challenge to build the necessary infrastructure for 3G
- Lack of member state support for financially troubled operators
- Expense of 3G phones

- Lack of buy-in by 2G mobile users for the new 3G wireless services
- Lack of coverage, because it is still a new service
- High prices of 3G mobile services in some countries, including Internet access (see flat rate)
- Current lack of user need for 3G voice and data services in a hand-held device
- High power usage

See also

- High-Speed Downlink Packet Access or HSDPA
- Evolved HSPA
- 2G
- 2.5G
- 2.75G
- 3.5G
- 3.75G
- 4G
- 3GP
- IP Multimedia Subsystem
- WiBro
- HSDPA
- UMTS
- GPRS
- WiMAX
- Wireless modem
- Spectral efficiency
- DigRF V3

Further reading

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2. ^ ITU Radiocommunication Assembly approves new developments for its 3G standards (http://www.itu.int/newsroom/press_releases/2007/30.html)

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