Advanced Research Report: C-RAN

Description: The pace of change in the wireless industry is faster today than it has ever been before. While it is easy to look at recent mobile data growth trends and predict that data growth is slowing down, more than likely, we are just in the early beginnings of a complete transformation in how humans and computers will communicate with one another. The rapid shift from voice-centric to data-centric applications introduces both challenges and opportunities for the carriers that need affordable, efficient, and adaptable networks that can address all the use cases for connected humans and machines both today and in the future.

Mobile revenue growth has for the most part kept up with mobile capital expenditures (Capex) since the smartphone boom started in 2007. However, higher device penetration, lack of new revenue streams, and increased competition in both developing and developed markets have caused worldwide mobile revenue growth to decelerate in the last couple of years, forcing the carriers to use Capex more efficiently.

For the most part, carriers have been able to cope with the explosion in mobile data traffic and the various use cases. However, given that we are still in the first phase of the overall mobile broadband transformation and base transceiver station density is very high in urban areas, with virtually limitless opportunities as use cases move beyond the smartphone, carriers are increasingly embracing the notion that there can be no shortcuts when it comes to network performance and agility.

Our C-RAN (centralized/coordinated radio access network) Report looks at the RAN architecture that moves the baseband unit (BBU) to a central location, connecting the BBU to the radios via fiber or microwave (fronthaul). The objective of centralizing the baseband is to improve the performance and use resources more efficiently and dynamically.

The Report answers such questions as:
- Which vendors are best equipped to benefit from C-RAN?
- How much equipment revenue will C-RAN radios and fronthaul generate over the next five years?

The Report includes a 5-year forecast looking at RAN and Baseband (separately reported by small cell versus macro cell), Fronthaul, and worldwide mobile wireless subscribers by technology and regions.

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