

Why All G Open RAN Is Crucial for Mobile Network Operators



2G and 3G Aren't Going Anywhere – Here's Why

With all the media buzz and excitement around 5G, it's no wonder some people may think 2G and 3G networks are being left in the past. However, it's important to understand that 2G and 3G networks aren't being shut down everywhere as they are crucial for bringing connectivity to more people around the globe.

Mobile Technology Future

First, let's talk about the numbers behind current and future mobile technology. The GSMA Mobile Economy Report 2020 highlighted how global operators see the change in the mobile technology mix. The number of 5G connections is expected to overtake the number of 2G connections in 2023 and 3G connections in 2025. Today, 4G is already the most popular technology and will continue to be so in 2025 as well.

Globally, 5% of subscribers are expected to be on 2G and 18% on 3G in 2025. While this may sound like a small number, 8.8 billion subscribers are forecasted to be around in 2025. That means there will be roughly 460 million 2G GSM subscribers and roughly 1.58 billion 3G UMTS subscribers. To put it in context, the combined number of 2G & 3G subscribers will be roughly one quarter of the world's population in 2025. For many regions outside the most advanced markets, there is a clear need for 2G and 3G users to be supported in 2025 and beyond. Furthermore, there will be more 2G and 3G users in MENA and Sub-Saharan Africa in 2025 as compared to 5G. For example, 3G is the fastest-growing technology in Africa, and any solution for Africa must support 2G and 3G.

Why OpenRAN

In the whitepaper 'Open RAN Integration: Run With It,' Iain Gillott, founder and president of iGR, Inc. and author of the whitepa-

per, says that "Open RAN has been deployed to support legacy 2G and 3G network technologies, as well as 4G LTE and 5G. It has been deployed in the most developed and competitive markets in the world, supporting some of the fastest-growing regions." This emphasizes the need for an All G solution.

Further emphasizing the importance of an All G solution is that the operators active in the Telecom Infra Project (TIP) feel the need for Open RAN to support not just 4G and 5G, but also 2G and 3G. This can be seen in the Joint Telefonica & Vodafone RFI results back in 2018, where different vendors were invited to provide information on their solutions for 2G, 3G & 4G, along with RRHs and end-to-end platforms. This again highlights that the two major operator groups are exploring solutions for All Gs, not just 4G and 5G. During TIP Summit 2019, Vodafone highlighted their Multi-Technology Open RAN trials in Turkey with Parallel Wireless. The trial covers 2G, 3G and 4G.

Conclusion

At Parallel Wireless we strongly believe that our All G Open RAN approach helps provide coverage, capacity and 5G ready solutions. This single solution is flexible to cater for different geographies, regions, markets, topographies, and more – while reducing operators' total cost of ownership to manage, maintain, and upgrade their mobile networks.