



FITCE.BE

newsletter

Issue 10, October 2001

Editorial



In these worrisome days after the appalling attacks at the heart of America's powerhouse on September 11, we can better concentrate on the future than folding back on ourselves in anguish. We rejoice at the successful congress in Barcelona and are already anticipating the next one in Genova. We still have the impression that this congress deserves a lot more interest from telecom experts than it actually gets. Paradoxically this may be due to the low price and perhaps a lasting perception that this society is exclusively linked to old state monopolies and therefore rather antiquated. Scarcity of sponsor monies will probably do away with the first item. Relentless efforts to open up and rejuvenate the national associations will be needed to resolve the second issue. FITCE Belgium, is among the first associations to have embarked on such a programme and the new president of FITCE Europe, our own José Van Ooteghem can be trusted to push the same ideas in the wider context. The Board of FITCE Belgium is pleased that it could recently welcome a new member from a second operator. Marc Verbruggen of KPN Belgium will operate as an observer until the next General Assembly can formally vote him in. It has always been the ambition to have more operators sitting on the board than just Belgacom and this is now fulfilled.

Speaking of the future, FITCE Belgium embarks on another ambitious project. Together with the association SITEL, four lunch sessions will be organised to address many different aspects of UMTS. Will UMTS cause a revolution or will it be a flop? The lunch sessions may not provide an answer to that question but they will certainly provide a lot of insight in what may make or break its future.

Marc Lambert
Managing Editor

e-Belgium

Evening Lecture

Please be reminded of the next evening lecture. This coming Wednesday, October 10, Mr Marc Aelbrecht of Cisco Systems talks about e-Belgium. Mr Aelbrecht wrote a book with the same title in which he exposes his fear that Belgium is too slow in adopting the Internet. He goes on pointing to some possible remedies. This evening promises again to be a stimulating experience. If you lost track of the pamphlet, with practical information, that was distributed to all members, get to the website home page <http://www.fitce.be> News item dealing with the lecture.

The role of a Telco in the Internet Age

Evening Lecture



We could again register a good number of attendants for the evening lecture 'The role of a Telco in the Internet Age'. No less than 78 people gathered on June 27 for this lecture. Pascal Methens, the announced speaker could unfortunately not deliver the speech due to urgent meetings. He was however ably replaced by Henri van der Vaeren, Head of Strategy and Business Development of the Belgacom Internet Business Unit and close collaborator of Pascal Methens who is President of the same Business Unit.

Mr van der Vaeren started his talk by illustrating the concept of digital lifestyles with a few striking examples. The use of the Internet and other modern means of communication like cellphones empowers the anti-globalisation protesters. MIT puts all its course materials freely available on the World Wide Web to help developing nations to acquire technological know-how and escape poverty. It is hardly believable but one out of every four Americans is a birdwatcher. More than 75,000 of them are connected in a world-wide network, resulting in world-wide adaptation of landscapes to fit the needs of migratory birds.

Next the main Internet market trends were addressed. The Internet has released tremendous creative forces, leading to important changes in the way business is done and the way we conduct our daily lives.

Internet-based business reengineering takes both reengineering and electronic B2B communication a giant step further. As connectivity becomes a commodity, Telcos need to move to higher value added services and indeed even beyond the delivery of services into staging experiences. Those ideas are advanced in such books like 'The Experience Economy' by Joseph Pine or 'The Dream Society' by Rolf Jensen.

How ISPs, Dotcoms and Telcos are reacting was the next item on the agenda. The debacle of the dotcoms left behind more than just disgruntled investors. There is a highly valuable legacy of new business models and social practices that will find their way back into society. As for ISPs, the reality is that only Telco-backed ISPs are doing well. For Telcos, the key issue is how far to position themselves on the Internet value chain.

Mr van der Haeren rounded up the talk with an impression of the many ways in which Belgacom is taking up the Internet challenge and opportunity. The Internet Business Unit is, in the short term, focusing on strengthening core revenues, while preparing for the mid and long-term growth of alternative revenues.



FITCE.BE

newsletter

Cont'd

Issue 10, October 2001

FITCE Europe Congress in Barcelona

Congress



Barcelona already belongs to our collective memory. The congress was attended by 471 people, 272 delegates and 199 accompanying persons. The technical conferences were of an excellent level and covered a broad area. Next to the conference as such, the Spanish colleagues succeeded in offering an excellent social programme as well as an attractive programme for the accompanying persons. Noblesse oblige, on the first night, a reception was offered in Gaudí's casa Batlló (see editorial) which is otherwise inaccessible to tourists. The incredibly original setting stimulated us all and set the stage for the rest of the congress.

Other highlights were the concert in the Santa Maria del Mar and the Olympic experience staged in the Olympic stadium. All delegates and partners marched behind their country's flag into the stadium for an unforgettable evening of exercise, fun and show.

Belgium was represented by 30 delegates and 16 accompanying persons. Like we did in Shannon, we gathered for an informal drink. Belgium scored very well at this congress both by the quantity and the quality of the presentations. There were eventually four presentations. Marc Mignon of Belgacom won the prize for the 'Best Young Presenter' with his paper 'The Introduction of Optical Networking into the Belgacom Backbone'. Egied Dekoster of Belgacom chaired the session on 'Next-Generation Network'.

General Assembly



The last day of the congress, as tradition requires, there was a General Assembly where the President Stefan Maruczak of Austria, the Secretary General Bert Maes from Belgium and Treasurer Georges Devroey also from Belgium reported on the state of affairs in FITCE. Important moment for us all was of course the election of the new president. Our FITCE Belgium president José Van Ooteghem was elected by acclamation and will now lead FITCE Europe for the next two years. We congratulate José and wish him a successful tenure.

Proceedings



As was done for the congress in Shannon, all members will receive the Proceedings.

FITCE Congress 2002

Genova



The 41st FITCE Congress will be organized by the Italian colleagues in Genova, September 11-14, 2002. As has become a solid value of the FITCE congresses, the organizers will strive to have a technical programme that is interesting for both generalists and specialists as well as a good social programme. There are creative ideas about changing the format. Some or all conference days may have a central theme introduced by a tutorial. The Comité de Direction has formed a committee to reengineer the congress and decide on the topics.

Membership Renewal

Keep FITCE Belgium healthy

All members will soon be invited to renew their membership for 2002. Be advised that the membership fees have slightly been upped to take into account an anticipated raise in the contribution we have to pay to FITCE Europe. This contribution has remained at the level of 10 euro for many years causing financial worries. New prices are 45 euro for individual members, 130 euro for corporate members. The price for supporting corporate members remains at 1000 euro.

Do you like FITCE? If so, why not move some of your friends or acquaintances into joining us? Anybody who joins now can enjoy membership for the rest of 2001 and all of 2002, thus taking advantage of the member discounts for the upcoming evening lecture and the planned lunch sessions.

Lunch Sessions on UMTS

Food for the mind and the body

The next big project of FITCE Belgium is a set of four lunch sessions on the hot topic of UMTS. These lectures are being organised together with SITEL. The programme is still in formation but will look like this:

Lecture 1 on November 28 : Professor Jean-Pierre Pirlot of the BIPT will introduce UMTS as technology compared with GSM, GPRS etcetera. Mr Pirlot will also address the regulatory environment, the state of deployment in Belgium, Europe and the rest of the world.

Lecture 2 An integrator will speak about the resources and skills required to build/migrate to UMTS. How sites are acquired or shared. Timing and radio planning will be other subjects.

Lecture 3 will be a panel discussion between the three licensed operators, Proximus, Mobistar and KPN Orange.

Lecture 4 will be given by a representative of the content/media players on the market. Topics : how to use UMTS as a new medium, business model and killer applications, copyrights ...

The dates for lectures 2-4 are not fixed yet. All lectures are preceded by lunch. More information will follow shortly.