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Editor**

Connectivity - protecting and enhancing lives around the world

Despite the fact that many of us have grown up or lived significant portions of our adults lives without much in the way of connectivity beyond a basic landline phone, we've come to take always-on connectivity as a given in today's world. From being able to keep up with emails in-flight or at sea, to keeping up with our TV programmes or making phone calls to loved ones while we're thousands of miles away from home, we have become addicted to connectivity.

Connectivity opens so many doors that, even a decade ago, would have remained firmly closed. We've got capabilities that bring massive benefits to human lives, such as life-saving scientific research being exchanged between different institutions around the world in an instant, remote learning and medical assistance, first responder interoperability and disaster recovery coordination, to name just a few. Of course, there are also the less-essential benefits like DTH broadcasting and OTT content distribution, Smart Homes, Cities and Phones, and cloud storage technology that have all been made possible by enhanced connectivity. All of these developments have made fundamental and irreversible improvements to the daily lives of millions of people around the world. And now that we have them, we could never go back.

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Today, few things are more annoying than suffering from low or no connectivity during a major event. I recently attended the Download Festival 2016 (a rock and metal music festival) at Donington Park, Leicestershire, and was most aggrieved to be sat in a field, surrounded by friends sharing their stories and photos on Facebook, while I was unable to get any form of reception. My annoyance increased from not being able to send photos of Rammstein's flame throwers to friends back home when the torrential rain hit, and I was unable to communicate from our campsite with friends inside the arena that their tent had been hit by a stray gazebo and transformed into a small swimming pool. Unable to rescue the waterlogged tent by myself before the damage was too extensive, those friends had to sleep in the car for the rest of the festival.

The ability to connect with friends, family, and of course, the emergency services, during a disaster event, is one of the biggest technological benefits achieved in the last decade. On 12 June 2016, many of us were distraught to hear that during a mass shooting in Pulse, a gay nightclub in Orlando, Florida, 49 members of the LGBT community had been killed, and a further 53 injured. It was the deadliest attack on the LBGT community in US history. Thanks to the high level of connectivity in the area, patrons trapped inside the nightclub during the attack were able to contact friends and loved ones. In addition, Facebook activated its 'Safety Check' feature in the Orlando area, its first US activation. The feature enables users to mark themselves as safe, which then notifies all family and friends via Facebook, reducing the number of individual calls and messages required for each person, while also reducing network congestion, which often peaks during such incidents.

It is during disaster events such as the Pulse attack that the true value of connectivity is most evident. Instead of taking it for granted, we, as part of the connectivity industry, should continue to strive for full coverage, in order to protect and enhance lives around the world. ∎