



Editor - Amy Saunders ●●●

Nobody makes anything medium sized anymore!

This issue of Satellite Evolution EMEA includes two articles on one of my favourite topics: Small satellites. In one, we take a look at the design and manufacturing processes that go into creating these tiny devices, while in the other, we examine the available and future launch opportunities, with a focus on the vast number of dedicated small satellite launch services under development.

It should come as no surprise to our readers that today, small satellites are big business. Along with the other key satellite trend, high throughput satellites (HTS), we are seeing some truly ground-breaking innovative new technologies being developed. It's certainly an exciting time to be involved in the satellite industry, especially for new entrants like myself. As HTS and small satellites are worlds apart from each other, the big and the small if you will, there is little competition between them. While small satellites fulfil Earth observation, Earth and space science, and experimental needs like the development of cutting-edge laser communications, HTS will meet demand for increased data transfers, broadcast capacity and mobile communications. The lack of market crossover makes the emergence of these two technologies truly complementary.

You only have to look around to see that this fascination with the very small and the very big is endemic, and reaches far beyond the satellite sector. We've got everything from doll-sized laptops to TVs too big to fit in living rooms, while tablet devices are being made both smaller than some mobile phones, and also large enough to replace TV monitors. Nowhere is this fascination with size more evident than with phones. When mobile phones initially entered the consumer market, the goal was to make the devices as small as possible – who among us can't remember lovingly replacing our brick-phones with new, tiny devices, only to lose them in the deep recesses of a bag? But as technology moved forward, the game changed. Today, the aim seems to be to make mobile phones too large for the average hand to hold comfortably.

It can be a very real struggle to find anything medium-sized. While shopping for an upcoming trip, I recently found that power banks only really come in two size options: Tiny, purse-sized devices that are too small to hold any useful amount of charge, or cumbersome, easy-to-snap devices weighing around half a kilogramme, that you don't really want to be lugging around the middle of nowhere. Where were the medium-sized devices, that could hold an adequate charge, and yet were also highly portable?

If the evolution of satellites follows that of terrestrial technology, we could, in our lifetimes, see space populated by a mixture of massive HTS and small satellites, with no middle ground between the two. Whether you're looking at the everyday tech industry or the world of satellites, the fundamental message seems to be this: Go big, or go small, or go home.

Will this latest attack put me off my planned trip to Brussels in May? Not at all – the effective response and appropriate distribution of essential information during the attack only leads me to believe that Brussels is well-placed to respond efficiently and appropriately during any catastrophic events that it may face in the future. Hybrid networks have played a key part in that, by providing unparalleled connectivity capabilities, in which satellite plays a fundamental role.



Photo courtesy of Shutterstock ●●●