Global Mobile Connections Forecast, 2016 – 2021: *Increasing Connections into the 5G Era*

Market Study
First Quarter 2017

Global Mobile Connections Forecast, 2016 – 2021: *Increasing Connections into the 5G Era*

A Market Study

Published First Quarter, 2017
Version 1.0
Report Number: 1Q2017-01

*iG*R
12400 W. Hwy 71
Suite 350 PMB 341
Austin TX 78738

Table of Contents

Abstract

Mobile subscribers worldwide increasingly depend on a variety of mobile devices to stay connected. One mobile subscriber can use many mobile connections, as is evidenced by many countries' current mobile penetration rates of more than 100 per cent. In addition to a mobile phone or smartphone, a subscriber can connect through a tablet or, increasingly, an embedded modem in a connected car or through a connected device in the Internet of Things (IoT).

The number of mobile connections in each region of the world is expected to grow at different rates, due to differences in the world's regions' underlying economies, the regions' willingness and eagerness to adopt new technologies, and the current strength or weakness of their economies.

The worldwide population is expected to grow over the next five years from its current 7.3 billion people. Due to the proliferation of mobile devices, including mobile phones, tablets, connected cars, and other IoT devices, the global mobile connections penetration rate will rise from 104 percent in 2016 to 126 percent in 2021.

Aside from the increase in the number of connections, the other major change over the forecast period is the shift from 2G to 3G and 4G and then to 5G at the very end of the forecast. For example, in 2016, 2G and 3G connections comprised approximately 80 percent of mobile connections, but 4G connections will become predominant by the end of the forecast. For the first time, 5G connections appear in *i*GR's Mobile Connections forecast, as IMT-2020 5G networks are expected to be commercially launched in select regions in 2021.

Key questions addressed:

- How many wireless connections are there globally and in each major geographic region?
- What is the split of those connections by technology type – both air interface and generation?
- What are some of the key connection-related trends by technology, including GSM, CDMA, UMTS/HSPA, LTE, and IMT-2020 (5G) for the world and for each region?
- What are the major markets for LTE both today and throughout the forecast period?
- When does *i*GR expect LTE to become a significant portion of the various regions' connections over the forecast period?

- How many 5G connections does *iG*R forecast for 2021, the expected year of the first commercial launches of the IMT-2020 networks?

Who should read this report?

- Mobile operators
- Device OEMs
- Mobile infrastructure and equipment OEMs
- Content providers and distributors
- Financial analysts and investors.