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New *iGR* study forecasts carrier-driven WiFi Offload to grow at a CAGR of 215 percent from 2012 to 2017

WiFi Offload will provide needed relief to congested 3G/4G Mobile Data Networks

AUSTIN, Texas, July 25th, 2013 – The role of WiFi has changed significantly in the last few years in the eyes of the wireless industry. Once a pariah among wireless data networks, WiFi has emerged as a legitimate “other network” option for mobile operators. While subscribers have to be within about 300 feet of a WiFi hotspot, or within a metro WiFi hotzone, carriers are looking hard at WiFi Offload as a way to not only provide their customers with high-quality, reliable wireless data, but also to relieve some of the congestion on their 3G mobile data networks.

WiFi hotspots have also been deployed by the cable MSOs (such as Time Warner Cable, Comcast, Cox, Cablevision, GCI, and Bright House Networks) as a way to extend their broadband services outside of the home and business.

Today, the predominant form of WiFi Offload is user-driven. That is, an end user chooses a WiFi connection over his/her mobile broadband connection. This might be because of coverage or because they want a faster connection or because they are rationing usage to avoid hitting their monthly mobile data plan allowance.

iGR expects the other type of WiFi Offload – carrier-driven – to take greater hold. Carrier-driven offload involves the mobile operator actively switching 3G/4G traffic to a WiFi network. The main issue here is technology; operators have to have the right equipment both in the network and in handsets. Today, the necessary technology is just starting to emerge. By 2017, *iGR* expects it to be far more prevalent.

iGR's new report forecasts the amount of data traffic offloaded from 3G/4G mobile broadband networks to WiFi in three categories of WiFi usage: WiFi Offload (user driven), WiFi Offload (carrier driven) and WiFi Only. *iGR*'s new study also forecasts the amount of mobile traffic

offloaded to WiFi by venue – hotels, sports arenas, airports, restaurants, schools, hospitals and public spaces.

WiFi Offload includes traffic that would flow over 3G/4G normally, but instead goes over WiFi by end user and/or carrier selection. *iGR* forecasts that the amount of carrier-driven WiFi Offload, measured in petabytes per month, will grow at a CAGR of 215 percent from 2012 to 2017, while user-driven WiFi Offload will also grow at a significant growth rate of 49 percent. WiFi Only includes connections from devices such as tablets, laptops, ereaders, and handheld gaming consoles that do not have a 3G/4G modem and can therefore only connect over WiFi. *iGR* forecasts a decline in this type of WiFi.

“WiFi offload is becoming a critical component in the hetnet and *iGR* believes that WiFi data usage will grow strongly over the forecast period,” said Iain Gillott, president and founder of *iGR*, a market research consultancy focused on the wireless and mobile industry. “Although WiFi Offload is a relatively small portion of the overall pie right now, it will grow to be larger than WiFi Only in terms of petabytes per month by 2016. For the mobile operators, WiFi offload can provide some critical relief for congested 3G and 4G networks.”

iGR's new market research report, *U.S. WiFi Offload Traffic Forecast, 2012 – 2017: Relief for Mobile Data Networks?*, provides details on WiFi and forecasts three types of traffic: WiFi Only, WiFi Offload (user driven) and WiFi Offload (carrier driven), through 2017, as well as splits on WiFi Offload traffic by venue.

The following key questions are addressed in the new research study:

- What is WiFi?
- Where is the WiFi standard headed?
- How is WiFi used?
- What is WiFi offload?
- What is the difference between user-driven WiFi offload and carrier-driven WiFi offload?
- What are some of the key standards efforts associated with WiFi offload?
- What are the potential benefits associated with WiFi offload?
- What are the potential issues associated with WiFi offload?
- What is WiFi only? How is it commonly used?
- How much WiFi offload traffic is expected through 2017?
- How much WiFi only traffic is expected through 2017?
- How do the two different types of WiFi data traffic inter-relate?
- How does WiFi offload usage split out by venue?

The information in this report will be valuable for:

- Mobile operators, including those with WiFi networks
- Device OEMs
- Content providers and distributors
- Cable MSOs and those offering WiFi services
- Financial analysts and investors.

The new report can be purchased and downloaded directly from *iGR*'s website at www.iGR-inc.com. Alternatively, contact Iain Gillott at (512) 263-5682 or at Iain@iGR-inc.com for additional details.

About iGR

iGR is a market strategy consultancy focused on the wireless and mobile communications industry. Founded by Iain Gillott, one of the wireless industry's leading analysts, in late 2000 as *iGillottResearch*, *iGR* is now entering its twelfth year of operation. *iGR* continuously researches emerging and existent technologies, technology industries, and consumer markets. We use our detailed research to offer a range of services to help companies improve their position in the marketplace, clearly define their future direction, and ultimately improve their bottom line.

iGR researches a range of wireless and mobile products and technologies, including: smartphones; tablets; mobile applications; bandwidth demand and use; small cell architectures; DAS; LTE; WiMAX; VoLTE; IMS; NFC; GSM/GPRS/UMTS/HSPA; CDMA 1x/EV-DO; iDEN; SIP; macro-, pico- and femtocells; mobile backhaul; WiFi and WiFi offload; and SIM and UICC.

A more complete profile of the company can be found at www.igr-inc.com.