Inside Towers

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What Data Do Authorities See When Conducting Cell Tower Dumps?

Cell tower data dumps have been all over the news these past few days—made a topic of conversation during the investigation of 10-year old Jessica Ridgeway's murder. Jenna Lee of Fox News spoke to David Kennedy, CEO of TrustedSec, about what the government sees when they take the data received from a cell tower. "They would see everything you did on your phone in those local cell tower areas. They would see everybody you called during those specific times, possible SMS data or your text messages, and GPS locations. All of those can be triangulated and grabbed from those cell towers in a tower dump," Kennedy said. While not too many people disagreed with the way authorities used this data in the investigation of Jessica Ridgeway's murder since it led to her killer in a roundabout way, many people are wondering what else this data is being used for. "All of this is being done without a warrant, which means they can go out and pull as much information as they want to with little rhyme or reason to why they need to do it and I think that's the major concern," Kennedy explains. When it comes to finding a missing child or locating a criminal, dumping cell towers doesn't seem too extreme but Kennedy does point out that there should be major oversight on what this data is being used for and who is using it before they can have access to it.

Private Investors Storm the Wireless Spectrum Auction

Even though the wireless spectrum auction has been pushed back until summer of 2015, 34 of the potential bidders were announced last week and there were two parts of this announcement that shocked people. First, none of the major carriers have signed up and secondly, at least 10 of the potential bidders are private investors. People are rushing to take part in this auction in hope to cash in on a scarce asset, since spectrum is a finite resource. The Wall Street Journal reported, "One of the private investors is Thomas Persons, who works part time in venture capital in South Carolina after retiring from AT&T in marketing. He got the notion to bid and then spent an hour and half filling out the application. 'We were all sitting around one afternoon and talking about it and said, 'Let's do one and see if I can do anything with it,'" Mr. Persons said. 'The bidding will be the fun part.'" Since there isn't an unlimited amount of spectrum, many people are trying to get a piece of it while they can because they know how valuable it will be. The coming auction by the Federal Communications Commission is for a small slice called the H block, which includes the 1915-1920 megahertz and 1995-2000 megahertz bands.

Wireless Network Infrastructure Market Expands along with Definition

As the wireless network infrastructure network continues to grow, different aspect of wireless technology are beginning to be lumped into this category. The term "wireless network infrastructure" was originally associated with macrocell Radio Access Network and mobile core network infrastructure for a long time; however, HetNet infrastructure, small cells, DAS, Remote Radio Heads, and the

emerging Cloud RAN concept have all become a part of this group. According to ReportsnReports, “Driven by the promise of added capacity and coverage with minimum investment in additional spectrum, HetNet infrastructure is expected to account for nearly $17 Billion in spending by the end of 2014. While macrocell RAN spending is forecast to decline at a CAGR of 3% over the next 6 years, research estimates that the overall wireless network infrastructure market encompassing macrocell RAN, HetNet, mobile core and backhaul infrastructure will witness tremendous growth over the coming years. Growing at a CAGR of over 5%, the market will account for over $104 Billion in annual spending by the end of 2020.”

NII Holdings Shifts Focus from Towers to Subscribers

Earlier this week, NII Holdings announced that the agreement to sell their towers in Brazil to American Tower Corporation had been completed. Yesterday, the company disclosed further details about its planning realignment under the ‘Project Accelerate’ initiative. According to TeleGeography, “The company will implement a restructuring and organizational realignment which includes reductions of over 25% of headquarter staff and the elimination of over 1,400 positions in its market operations. According to NII, this will result in a more streamlined management structure that is expected to reduce costs and improve operational efficiency while retaining the company’s focus on accelerating subscriber growth. In a further move, NII has modified its customer disconnection policy for inactive pre-paid subscribers, and as such expects a higher level of pre-paid customer deactivations in Mexico than previously estimated. The firm now expects a net subscriber loss of approximately 400,000 in Mexico for the fourth quarter of 2013.”

Corning Incorporated Announces DAS Systems Are Now in 50+ Sports Venues and Arenas

Corning Incorporated announced that their DAS deliver always-on wireless coverage was in more than 50 sports venues and areas across North America. "Corning is committed to designing unique solutions that help carriers provide the best wireless experience to sports fans, athletes, and event staff," said Mike O'Day, vice president, Optical Connectivity Solutions, Corning. "With our DAS, large venues can finally address issues with spotty coverage and dropped calls, giving fans the ability to instantly share their experiences with their friends and family." Drawing on more than 160 years of materials science and process engineering knowledge, Corning creates and makes keystone components that enable high-technology systems for consumer electronics, mobile emissions control, telecommunications and life sciences.

G.fast May Solve Small Cell Backhaul Problems

The International Telecommunications Union has approved G.fast, which is the new ITU broadband standard capable of achieving access speeds of up to 1 Gbit/s over existing telephone wire. G.fast bonds copper wires together (pair-bonding) and then combines these pairs into virtual pairs for even more bandwidth. According to RCR Wireless, “The approval is good news for Verizon Communications and other operators working to deliver high-speed Internet access via fiber. It is also good news for chipmaker Sckipio Technologies, which makes G.fast modems. The company envisions its modems inside small cells because small cells equipped with G.fast modems could theoretically use copper wires for fast backhaul.”

Wireless Signal Boosters May Help You Receive Better On-the-Go Coverage

While there are cell towers all over the place, sometimes if the gap between two sites is wide enough you can lose service. Not only does this cause frustration, but you may end up getting lost if

you are relying on your wireless device for directions. The FCC suggests using signal boosters, which are devices that improve wireless coverage to areas with poor signal levels. “When these devices are properly installed, they can help consumers, wireless service providers, and public safety first responders by extending reliable service to areas that would otherwise have weak signals such as tunnels, subways, inside buildings and in rural and underserved areas. Well-designed signal boosters hold great potential to empower consumers in rural and underserved areas to improve their wireless coverage in their homes, at their jobs, and when they travel by car, recreational vehicle, or boat,” the FCC explains.

Tower Ticker

Symbol	Last Sale	Change	% Change	Share Volume	Market
AMT	$77.81	1.40	▼ 1.77%	2,745,216	NYSE
CCI	$74.14	1.07	▼ 1.42%	1,543,121	NYSE
SBAC	$86.76	0.14	▼ 0.16%	1,117,484	NASDAQ
Information as of 4:00pm ET 12/11/2013					

Zoning and Moaning

Crown Castle Looks to add Equipment to Towers in California

The Montecito Board of Architectural Review in California is allowing Crown Castle to install distributed antenna systems on utility poles in the area. This project proposes to add the telecommunications facilities to 29 existing poles. At last week’s conceptual review, the board asked for the project to be broken into two, between the coastal region’s 11 sites and the inland region’s 18 sites. About 50 residents attended the meeting to voice their opposition. They are concerned about the aesthetics, potential health impacts, and property devaluation.

Illinois Town Votes Against Cell Tower Generator

At the beginning of the week, members of the Palatine Village Council in Illinois denied a request from American Tower Corporation who requested to install a diesel generator in the yard of a cell phone tower located in a residential neighborhood. The zoning board did not hesitate and unanimously denied the petition. Residents were concerned about the potential generator for fear that it might be loud and a safety hazard. American Tower was looking to add the generator as a back-up service, something highly recommended by the FCC, in case an emergency occurs and the power goes out. With a generator in

Tampa Elementary School Pushes for Cell Tower

Despite the parents’ concerns, the members of Pasco County School Board in Tampa, Florida are hesitant to deny a cell tower proposal solely based on health concerns. After the board meeting earlier this week, the members agreed to delay the vote on the proposal, which is projected to bring the

district $1 million over the next 30 years. This extra time will allow parents to collect more information on the risks associated with the towers. However, the school board has already approved similar agreements for other campuses.

Tower Safety

NATE STAR Initiative 1st Quarter Audits Due Soon

Yesterday, the National Association of Tower Erectors shared that the deadline for submitting NATE STAR Initiative quarterly audits is December 31, 2013. The NATE STAR Initiative requires that site safety audits be submitted for 10% of a company's projects or 6 sites per quarter, whichever is less. In the event of a fatality, NATE requires audits for 25% of your sites or 15 per quarter, whichever is less.

Byrd Telecom Inc. Continues to Contest Safety Violations

On May 28, 2013 OSHA cited Byrd Telecom, Inc. for two safety violations after two workers fell from a gin pole and died in Georgetown, MS. The gin pole, being used to hoist cell site mounting frames and antennas, reportedly had a failure in its rigging, causing 2 men to fall to their death. The initial penalty for this violation was $14,000, $7,000 for each incident. However, Byrd Telecom Inc. issued their statement of contest on October 28, 2013. This matter remains unresolved since Byrd Telecom Inc. is contesting the violations and hasn't paid the fines.