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**Ireland becoming a 'spectrum playground'**

Friday, April 13 2007

by **Maxim Kelly**

*A large, unmarked white van full of men in white coats is expected to begin cruising the streets of Dublin in search of invisible stuff.*

The mobile unit of scientists, chosen for their abilities to go "skulking around various locations in the Greater Dublin area," is embarking on a project to figure out how increasingly scarce space in the world's radio wavebands can best be used.

The Commission for Communication Regulation (ComReg) has issued a licence to the group of international wireless industry experts led by Trinity College's Centre for Telecommunications Value Chain Research (CTVR) to work out what social and economic uses spare radio spectrum could be put to.

"ComReg has an innovative wireless test and trial scheme, making Ireland one of the very few places in the world where activity of this kind can take place," said Professor Donal O'Mahony, director of CTVR. "The trials will showcase cognitive or *smart* radio, innovative networks and emerging frequency technologies with a unique opportunity for companies worldwide to trial innovative wireless communications technologies."

Ireland is seen as an ideal place for wireless communications technology trials, and firms such as Shared Spectrum Company, QiniteQ, and Motorola Research Labs are taking part in the exploratory trials ahead of a wireless tech conference due to be held in Dublin next week.

Several hundred experts in the area of wireless communications are expected to attend the three-day DySpan (Dynamic Spectrum Access Networks) conference in the capital from 17 April. At the same time, Dublin is also hosting a related symposium for the Institute of Electronic and Electrical Engineers' Vehicular Technology Conference (VTC) on wireless communications.

"Ireland is an ideal base for experimental trials of the latest concepts and developments in wireless communications before deployment in target areas worldwide. The local research capacity, combined with ComReg's enlightened licensing policy, positions Ireland to be the wireless research community's spectrum playground," said O'Mahony.

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ComReg chairman Mike Byrne welcomed the conferences to Dublin: "ComReg is keen to encourage innovative developments and more efficient ways to use spectrum. We wish to encourage development in these technologies through our test and trial licence scheme."

The regulator also issued a briefing note on its approach to encouraging more effective uses of radio spectrum.

**Dynamic Spectrum Access is both a technology and a management method that could unlock greater potential efficiencies in spectrum usage. Increasing pressure, particularly in highly sought after frequency bands, is driving demand for faster access to spectrum resources. Dynamic spectrum access is about gaining access to frequencies at a certain time or in a certain location on a relatively temporary basis, even where the frequencies had already been assigned to another user -- who isn't using it at that particular time or location. The potential reward of more flexible spectrum management is greater innovation in terms of wireless technology and services to consumers.**

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