VOICE & DATA

Cloud gaming to consume 25% of 5G data traffic by 2022: Openwave Mobility report

As mobile operators deploy 5G networks, it's vital that they prepare for the disruptive impact that cloud gaming could pose.

According to mobile operator executives attending Openwave Mobility's Mobile Video Industry Council (MOVIC) livecast, most operators believed that cloud gaming could represent 25% to 50% of 5G data traffic by 2022, based on the rapid progression of cloud gaming services in recent months.

Over 50 operators including Vodafone, Orange, Deutsche Telekom, Verizon, AT&T and Telefonica discussed the latest mobile data trends. Analysts from Analysys Mason, Strategy Analytics and ABI Research also contributed their own research.

5G networks will support cloud game streaming, enabling consumers to play digital games on their handsets without the need to own or install a copy of the game. These subscription-based services will give consumers access to a high-end gaming experience without requiring additional hardware.

"The recent emergence of cloud gaming platforms including Google Stadia, Apple Arcade, Microsoft xCloud and Snap Games has not escaped the attention of the operator

community," said John Giere, President and CEO of Openwave Mobility. "Over-the-top (OTT) players have ambitious plans to become the 'Netflix for gaming', hosting libraries of thousands of instantly accessible games that, ultimately, will consume three to four times the amount of bandwidth on 5G networks, compared to standard definition video traffic. Needless to say this will impact mobile operator data strategies."

Giere concluded, "While 5G network rollouts are still in their infancy, OTTs are already planning Augmented, Virtual and Mixed Reality services, in addition to cloud gaming. Combined with the expected continued growth of streaming video, these services will rapidly eat into the additional bandwidth provisions of 5G."

MOVIC was set up as a forum for mobile operator personnel to share data, best practice and strategies with their peers, relating to the growth of mobile video and other emerging forms of mobile traffic.