

Transforming internet usage with 5G

The telecom industry in India has evolved over the past few years, seeing numerous changes from 2G to 4G. Today, mobile handsets not only function as the means of communication with our loved ones but also as a source of entertainment. Now, fifth-generation, or 5G, technology is on its way to not only changing the way we communicate, but also paving the way for new consumer-technology interactions. The government has already set things rolling by creating a panel to ready a blueprint for the rollout of 5G mobile networks in India by 2020, a move that not only promises to make wireless connections seamlessly fast but will also provide for the spread of internet-connected smart devices. Here is how 5G will revolutionize the Indian telecom industry:

Speedy and reliable network: There is no denying the new 5G network will be fast and reliable. Through 5G connectivity one will achieve average speeds between 30Mbps (megabits per second) and 35 Mbps as compared to average 4G speeds between 4 Mbps and 16 Mbps. In terms of downloads, 5G networks would facilitate speeds up to 10 Gbps (gigabits per second). This implies that a full high-definition movie can be downloaded in a matter of minutes as opposed to a 4G network that can take more than an hour for the same.

Innovative services for IoT: The new capabilities of 5G will span several dimensions that will include tremendous flexibility, lower energy needs, greater bandwidth, better security and reliability as well as lower device costs. These, in turn, will yield innovative internet of things (IoT) services for automobile and other industries. It is expected that transportation services such as shared-bicycle services, which had earlier swept China, can succeed in India by utilizing the strengths of 5G.

The monetary aspect: Another benefit of 5G's roll out will be the revenue aspect which is incredibly important given the current flattish trend in the country. Experts predict there will be 2 billion connected devices by 2020, which will facilitate new revenue sources. Globally, 5G is expected to generate up to \$3.5 trillion in revenue and support up to 22 million jobs by the year 2035. Moreover, 5G will also enable organizations to move into new markets and explore new revenue streams.

Abundance of data: 5G technology can distribute internet access to 'nodes' within a building and can be deployed with union of wired or wireless network connections. The router and switch technology used in 5G networks can provide high connectivity. Moreover, all services such as telephony, gaming and other multimedia applications will be accessed by a single IP (Internet Protocol) address.

A smarter India: The dream of smart and connected cities, automobiles, appliances, etc., can never be fulfilled without the presence of appropriate network speed and security—something that can be enabled by 5G, thus bringing the dream closer to reality.

So, what will happen to 4G and older network technology in India?

Even with the coming of 5G, the older generations of mobile technology are expected to survive for a few more years due to the prevalence of a large number of feature phones. The transition to 5G will accelerate the changes brought about by the arrival of 4G—something we have already experienced. It is the pre-5G technology that will make the industry future-ready for meeting the burgeoning data demand in the country. So, for telecom players to be relevant in 5G, they would need to have a very good quality 4G network. Moreover, the introduction of 5G would likely be affected by how the competition among mobile carriers develops.

The coming of 5G will only complement the already growing data usage among Indian consumers. Data analysis by True Balance, which provides tracking services for mobile and data usage in India, reveals that the usage amount has shown a 200% increase over the last six months and the upward trajectory is expected to continue. Data consumption patterns among Indians show an increase in usage of video streaming apps—and with better bandwidth and connectivity, 5G would likely boost this consumption trend. These truly are exciting times for consumers.

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