Welcome to the third issue of *IJBD CN* in 2009! This issue contains four articles focused on Next Generation Networks (NGN).

There is a paradigm shift in the telecommunications industry today due to convergence in various technologies and services, the ubiquity of the Internet, the intelligence of terminal devices and declining cost of telecom bandwidth. The industry today is divided between two sets of firms: (a) the traditional telecommunications companies, which have their legacy infrastructure and market orientation, and still are closely regulated, and (b) the new age firms that attempt to provide all telecom services over the ubiquitous Internet, almost free, with entirely different revenue models, and are not closely watched by the regulators. The NGN is expected to bridge the gap between these two sets of firms, enabling the traditional telcos to offer Internet Protocol (IP) based services while allowing newly developed IP-based services by the Internet firms to be offered over the network infrastructure of telcos. An important paradigm in this arena is IP Multimedia Subsystem (IMS) which may be defined as a generic architectural framework for delivering IP multimedia services. It is considered to be the ‘next big thing’ in the Telecom industry. However, though the NGN technologies are at an advanced state of development, industry is rather slow to adopt it due to legacy issues.

The first article by Harno, et. al. addresses one of the transitions towards NGN whereby the traditional distinction between fixed and mobile networks and services blur. The article discusses the business case of integrated operators who have the fixed and mobile network license and how they can benefit by migrating to a Fixed Mobile Convergence (FMC) platform. The study illustrates using a case of an European telecom operator, how an FMC driven strategy though requires capital investment, can be turned into a profitable one through additional revenues earned from new convergent services and reduction in operating expenses.

The IMS enables network services to be delivered to users independent of access-type using packet based IP connectivity and service control architecture. The second article by Nasser & Shang, illustrates a subscription-based policy control framework that implements a subscription-centered approach for policy control. This approach enables flexible policy definitions based on the subscriber’s profile at the application level. The framework also provides functionalities of organizing the subscription data, identifying the policy, regulating the policy control process, interpreting, managing and enforcing the corresponding policies. The authors claim that this approach will enhance network services customization of different sets of subscribers.

One of the core components of NGN is the IP version 6 (IPv6) that allows more than a hundred million trillion addresses to be allocated for each square inch of the earth’s surface and hence could
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