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INTERVIEW

IEEE ComSoc Europe, Middle-East and Africa Region

Interview with Javier Berrocal, IEEE ComSoc EMEA Region Director

by Stefano Bregni, Global Communications Newsletter Editor-in-Chief, IEEE Division III Director, and Javier Berrocal, IEEE ComSoc EMEA Region Director

This article continues the series of ten interviews with the Officers of the IEEE ComSoc Member and Global Activities (MGA) Council for the term 2024–2025, which will be published every month in the Global Communications Newsletter.

In this series of articles, I introduce the Vice-President and the six Directors of the MGA Council (namely: Member Services, Industry Outreach, and AP, NA, LA, and EMEA Regions), as well as the three Chairs of the Women in Communications Engineering (WICE), Young Professionals (YP), and Sister Societies Standing Committees. In each interview, one by one they present their sector activities and plans.

Stefano Bregni Javier Berrocal

In this issue, I interview Javier Berrocal, IEEE ComSoc Director of the Europe, Middle East, and Africa (EMEA) Region.

Javier Berrocal is an associate professor at the University of Extremadura (Spain), currently habilitated as a full professor. He is also the Vice-rector of Digital Transformation at the same university. The main research areas of Javier Berrocal are cloud computing, edge computing, cloud-to-thing computing, Digital Twin, and Mobile computing. In these areas, he published more than 60 papers in indexed journals, and more than 100 papers in highly prestigious conferences. Javier Berrocal is also co-founder of two different companies: Global Process and Product Innovation S.L. (Gloin), and Health and Aging Tech S.L. (HAT). In addition, he is leading projects with different companies to help them in the transition to Industry 4.0/5.0. Finally, he is serving/served as TPC Co-Chair in a number of IEEE ComSoc conferences and he is also currently involved in the Communications Systems Integration and Modeling (CSIM) Technical Committee.

Stefano: Hello Javier! Would you like to begin by introducing the Europe, Middle East, and Africa Region to our readers? What are its main characteristics?

Javier: The EMEA region covers a very large geographical area that extends over three different continents: Africa, Europe, and part of Asia. Concretely, it stretches from Cape Town (South Africa) in the South, Lisbon (Portugal) in the West, through Hammerfest (Norway) in the North, to Vladivostok (Russia) in the East.

The region is served by 53 local chapters having together more than one-fifth of the ComSoc members worldwide. Chapters provide a local connection for our society members. This large land area and number of chapters brings with it a great cultural and linguistic diversity, as well as a very diverse set of problems to be addressed, needs to be met and activities to be organized from different perspectives.

In addition, while the distance between Chapters can be seen as a problem, it is an advantage to foster a greater information exchange and enhance the complementarity between Chapters.

This is your first time serving as IEEE ComSoc EMEA Region Director. How was your first impression when you were appointed? And on the first days, after you started serving in your new position? What was the first difficulty you faced?

To be honest, it was a great surprise and an honor. For the past few years, I have been serving ComSoc in different programs, such as the Internet for All, and the EMEA region as part of the Board, but being Director of the region is a dream come true.

The biggest difficulty I found as a regional director is the number of activities I have to manage and coordinate, but I have a great team that helps me every step of the way: Claudio Fiandrino, who helps me with the definition of new services; Saud Althunibat who coordinates the DLT/DSP program; John Vardakas who manages the award program; Niko Mäkitalo who is focused on the membership development; Marwa K. Qaraqe who is our social media manager; and Diomidis Michalopoulos in charge of fostering the cooperation between the industry and the academia. Thanks to them, and the advice of the former Director Luca Foschini, the difficulties are fewer and easier to overcome.

What is the best news of this year?

A few weeks ago, we re-launched the EMEA Award Program. Usually, this program recognizes the outstanding work of young researchers, who have been very active in IEEE ComSoc through publication and conference activities over the last three years, and senior individuals who have significantly contributed to the development of IEEE ComSoc activities in the EMEA Region.

This year, we defined a new award focused on honoring individuals who were/are industry employees and have achieved major industrial accomplishments that are of substantial benefit to the public in the field of communications. We are really excited about this new award, as it allows us to cover an important area for members in the EMEA region.

The Distinguished Lecturer Program (DLP) and the Distinguished Speaker Program (DSP) are particularly appreciated by our Members. What are the activities of your EMEA Region under these ComSoc Programs?

DLTs provide the means for ComSoc chapters to identify and arrange lectures by renowned experts on communications and networking-related topics. ComSoc's DSPs enable current and past distinguished lecturers as well as ComSoc officers, IEEE Fellows, and prominent speakers to schedule lectures while traveling on business trips. DLTs and DLPs give invaluable networking and socializing opportunities to our members and the opportunity for ComSoc to advertise its activities.

During the last few months, we have been working on increasing the number of DLTs in the EMEA region, easing the acceptance of these activities, and increasing the expenses that are covered. This allowed us to increase the number of DLTs in different parts of the region.

What are the most difficult challenges, which you face in the EMEA Region?

We have three important challenges: strengthening existing chapters, improving the industry-academia cooperation, and increasing the number of female members in the region. Currently, there are some chapters with vacancies, we are working on motivating members to fill these positions.

Regarding the second challenge, we are working on an initiative, launched by Christos Verikoukis and continued by Luca Foschini, to close the gap between industry and academia in our region, engaging people from industry to actively participate in our activities.

Finally, to increase the number of female members, both Virginia Pilloni and Anna Maria Vegni are working on organizing different activities focused on promoting the advancement of women in communications.

And what about Students? Do you organize regularly any specific activities for them?

We organize different activities for students. For instance, at the end of the year, we usually organize a panel. In this panel, students can present their work to panelists remotely. The panelists analyze their work and provide valuable feedback. This initiative was highly appreciated by our students, and we will open a call for participation in October, so, stay tuned!

In addition, as a new activity, this year we promoted the IEEE Region 8 Student and Young Professional Congress 2024, held in Grenoble. This event gathers both students and young professional members. SYP's main goal is to enhance and foster the engineering sense and capabilities through different activities both technically and culturally. Concretely, in this event, we organized a workshop to promote IEEE ComSoc.

To conclude, what are the most serious challenges that you are coping with?

The extension of the region together with the cultural diversity is a fascinating challenge. We are being innovative and imaginative to promote IEEE ComSoc activities in all parts of the region so that we can all be enriched by the knowledge of chapters in other areas.

COMSOC SISTER SOCIETY

Introducing ComSoc Sister Society Series: KICS and IEIE, South Korea

by Baek-Young Choi, Chair of IEEE ComSoc Sister Societies Committee, USA

IEEE Communications Society has relationships with societies of similar areas of interest and technical scope in many nations. The Sister Societies Committee is charged with developing the strategy, formulating the process, and engaging with the ComSoc Sister to promote additional cooperation in a specific discipline through joint activities. To engage and foster cooperation with the sister societies, our committee embarked on an initiative to introduce some of the prominent sister societies to the ComSoc community.

For this first article, we asked Prof. Chungyong Lee, President of the Institute of Electronics and Information Engineers (IEIE) (S. Korean counterpart of IEEE), and Prof. Seong Ho Jeong, President of the Korean Institute of Communications and Information Sciences (KICS) (S. Korean counterpart of IEEE and IEEE ComSoc), and to introduce their societies.

The Institute of Electronics and Information Engineers (IEIE)

by President Chungyong Lee, South Korea

Chungyong Lee
President of the Institute of Electronics and Information Engineers (IEIE), S. Korean counterpart of IEEE

The IEIE (https://www.theieie.org) is the South Korean counterpart of IEEE. It is one of the oldest and most representative academic organizations in the IT sector of Korea and is celebrating its 78th anniversary in 2024. It currently has around forty-two thousand registered members.

Its governance consists of the General Assembly, the Council, and the Board of Directors. The organization includes six Societies and twelve Regional Sections. The six Societies cover major academic and technical fields, and forty-two Technical Groups operate under these Societies. The Societies include the Communications Society and the AI Signal Processing Society. The Communications Society encompasses the Intelligent Networks Technical Group, the Microwave and Antennas Technical Group, and five other Technical Groups.

IEIE publishes two journals in English, one journal in Korean, and one magazine in Korean. It hosts various conferences and technical workshops, including ICCE-ASIA and ICEIC. Additionally, it promotes cooperation with the government, related institutions, research institutes, and organizations. In collaboration with IEEE, the IEIE signed an MOU of cooperation in 1994, an MOU for the joint award in 2004, and an MOU for a conference with the IEEE Consumer Technology Society in 2012.

IEIE Summer Conference 2024

The Korean Institute of Communications and Information Sciences (KICS)

by President Seong Ho Jeong, South Korea

Seong Ho Jeong
President of the Korean Institute of Communications and Information Sciences (KICS), S. Korean counterpart of IEEE and IEEE ComSoc

The Korean Institute of Communications and Information Sciences (KICS) (https://www.kics.or.kr) is the South Korean Sister Society of IEEE ComSoc. It is the largest ICT academic organization in Korea, with over 30,000 members, 60 affiliated companies, 8 domestic and 13 overseas sections, 6 societies, and 30 technical activity groups.

KICS has strong support from leading global IT companies and research institutions in Korea, including Samsung Electronics, LG Electronics, Qualcomm, Ericsson-LG, National Instruments, SK Telecom, KT, LGU+, ETRI, KETI, KISDI, Huawei, Hanwha Systems, LIG Nex1, Lotte Data Communications, GL Associates, and SK Broadband. Additionally, KICS actively engages in global collaborations with its international members to advance communications and networking technology through 13 overseas sections in countries such as the US, China, Japan, France, Spain, Hungary, Vietnam, Indonesia, Laos, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Malaysia, and the Philippines. As the Korean Sister Society of IEEE ComSoc, KICS maintains a strong relationship with ComSoc, working together to achieve the shared goal of international cooperation through jointly sponsored conferences, co-sponsored publications, and the promotion of major events.

KICS was founded on October 19, 1974, with the mission "to establish a comprehensive scientific theoretical system through academic research on telecommunications and its industry, and to promote the academic development and dissemination of this theory both domestically and internationally, thereby contributing to the enhancement of human welfare and national development through telecommunications science and its industry." KICS is celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2024.

In terms of governance, KICS is led by a President, an Executive Vice President, and three main Vice Presidents, each responsible for Academic Research Affairs, Information Affairs, and Academic Business Affairs. Additionally, there are fourteen appointed Vice Presidents and fifty Executive Directors working under the guidance of these eighteen Vice Presidents. The current KICS President for 2024 is Prof. Seong Ho Jeong from Hankuk University of Foreign Studies in Korea. President Jeong has held various leadership roles in ITU-T Study Groups, contributing to the development of standards for multimedia systems & applications, performance, and quality of service/experience.

KICS organizes three annual domestic conferences each year - in winter, summer, and fall - drawing over 5,000 ICT R&D experts who present their latest research findings and discuss emerging technological trends. Additionally, KICS hosts several international conferences annually, which are technically co-sponsored by IEEE ComSoc. These include the International Conference on ICT Convergence (ICTC, ictc.org), the International Conference on Ubiquitous and Future Networks (ICUFN, icufn.org), and the International Conference on Artificial Intelligence in Information and Communication (ICAIIC, icaiic.org).

KICS established a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with IEEE ComSoc in 2000, becoming a Sister Society to promote international cooperation in conferences, membership benefits, and publications. The Journal of Communications and Networks (JCN), a joint publication of KICS and IEEE ComSoc, is a global SCIE-indexed journal focused on communications and information networks, founded in 1999 as a result of this strong partnership. In 2005, the IEEE ComSoc/KICS Exemplary Global Service Award was established to recognize members from both societies for exemplary and distinguished service in globalizing communications.

The close relationship between KICS and IEEE ComSoc has advanced significantly since 2000, highlighted by the election of KICS President Byeong Gi Lee as the IEEE Communications Society President for 2010–2011. Today, KICS continues to support the IEEE Seoul Section and IEEE ComSoc Seoul Chapter through its robust event organization and logistics capabilities, reinforcing international cooperation.

KICS is proud to have IEEE ComSoc as a Sister Society, sharing in global activities focused on advancing communications and networking technologies to enhance the membership experience. In addition to JCN, KICS publishes ICT Express, another global SCIE-indexed journal covering communications and related fields, and J-KICS, a global journal indexed by Scopus.

KICS Summer Conference 2024

The 14th International Conference on ICT Convergence organized by KICS and technically co-sponsored by IEEE ComSoc

COMSOC CONFERENCE

IEEE/CIC International Conference on Communications in China 2024 (ICCC 2024)

7-9 August 2024, Hangzhou, China

by Qianqian Yang, Zhiguo Shi, Jiming Chen, Co-Chairs, Zhejiang University, Hangzhou, China

From August 7–9, 2024, the IEEE ICCC 2024 unfolded in the dynamic and historic city of Hangzhou, the capital of Zhejiang Province, situated in eastern China. Known for its blend of rich cultural heritage and modern technological development, Hangzhou provided an ideal backdrop for this prestigious event. Over 700 attendees from around the globe, including distinguished research scholars, leading industry professionals, and high-level government representatives, gathered to explore the latest innovations and breakthroughs in the field of communications.

IEEE ICCC 2024 took place at the Dragon Hotel, a luxurious five-star hotel located just a short walk from the historic West Lake (Xihu). The hotel is also conveniently close to other notable attractions, including the Zhejiang World Trade Convention and Exhibition Center, Lingyin Temple, and various other landmarks. This hotel offers up to 4,500 square meters of meeting and event space, featuring two pillarless ballrooms with ceilings of 7.5 meters and 4.5 meters, respectively, including one ballroom spanning 1,200 square meters and 16 versatile function rooms.

About ICCC

The IEEE International Conference on Communications in China (ICCC) was launched in 2012 and has grown into a prominent annual event, co-organized by the IEEE Communications Society (ComSoc) and the China Institute of Communications (CIC). The goal of the conference is to foster collaboration between global researchers and professionals in communications, with a particular focus on innovations in the Greater China region.

West Lake: Hangzhou's Most Historic and Iconic Landmark, Just Minutes from the Conference Site, Showcasing Centuries of Beauty and Cultural Heritage

This year, the ICCC 2024 conference was held in Hangzhou, with Jianfeng Du, President of Zhejiang University, serving as the honorary chair. Yanchuan Zhang, Vice Chairman and Secretary-General of the China Institute of Communications, Nei Kato, Professor at Tohoku University, and Jiming Chen, President of Hangzhou Dianzi University/Professor at Zhejiang University, served as the general chairs. Themed 'Ubiquitous Communications @ Future,' ICCC 2024 featured 12 symposiums, 12 tutorials, 20 workshops, 19 invited talks, 13 demos, and 2-panel discussions. The conference received a record-high 1,074 paper submissions, and after a rigorous review process, 523 papers were accepted. With a record number of paper submissions, registrations, and 11 industry sponsors, this year's conference can be considered a success.

Program Highlights

Prof. Sherman Shen, former president of IEEE ComSoc, kicked off the event with his warm welcoming speech.

This conference features six insightful and inspiring keynote speeches, delivered by six renowned scholars, Prof. Khaled Letaief, Prof.

Shuguang Cui, Prof. Rahim Tafazolli, Prof. Rahim Tafazolli, and Dr. Wen Tong, in the field of communication and information technology. These speeches examined the opportunities and challenges that 6G will face, with a particular focus on key enabling technologies like Sage Spectrum-Information Assignment, edge AI, semantic communication, and generative AI, which hold immense value for advancing future wireless communication technologies.

For the first time, ICCC 2024 included an invited talk session, running throughout days 2 and 3, featuring 19 invited talks delivered by renowned experts in the field of communications who shared their latest research findings. For instance, Professor Sun Sumei from the Agency for Science, Technology, and Research in Singapore explored the integration of AI and sensing technologies in 6G systems.

This year's conference had 11 industry sponsors, including Huawei, NI, General Test, Pango Micro, Zengyi Technology, and six others, setting a new record. Each sponsor had an exhibition booth at the conference venue, showcasing their latest innovations and solutions, while also networking with attendees.

Banquet and Presentation of Awards

The ICCC 2024 banquet, held at the end of Day 2, was a highlight of the conference, providing a sophisticated and memorable evening for attendees to unwind and network after a day of intensive technical sessions and presentations. The event began with opening remarks by Professor Sherman Shen and Professor Jiming Chen.

Throughout the evening, awards for best paper and demo were presented. The banquet also featured intermittent lottery draws and traditional Chinese artistic performances, including classical dance, Yue opera, sand painting, and folk music.

Following a rigorous review and selection process, 11 papers from the 382 accepted technical papers and 2 demos from the 13 accepted demos were honored with Best Paper or Best Demo awards. These award-winning papers and demos exemplify exceptional contributions to the field of communication, including:

- One paper proposed 6G radar technology in monostatic integrated sensing and communication system;
- One demo showcased the implementation of a reconfigurable holographic surface that enables an energy-efficient mmWave ultra-massive MIMO communication system.

At the banquet, the exciting lottery featured 20 third prizes, 10 second prizes, and 3 impressive first prizes, plus one grand prize. Lucky winners received carefully selected gifts from the organizers.

The organizing committee and keynote speakers on stage at the Opening Session. From left to right: Zhisheng Niu, Nei Kato, Tong Song, Wei Zhang, Shuguang Cui, Khaled B. Letaief John Cioffi, Sherman Shen, Jiming Chen, Sumei Sun, Zhiguo Shi, Dusit Niyato, and Shibo He.

Chinese art performances at the banquet.

Conclusion

ICCC 2024, concluded with remarkable success setting records for paper submissions, registrations, and sponsorships.

The conference's technical program was a highlight, featuring 12 well-curated Technical Symposia that covered a broad spectrum of topics. These symposia addressed emerging trends and innovations in areas such as 6G wireless communication, AI-enabled networks, integrated sensing and communication, and optical wireless technologies.

Another highlight was the invited talk session, The invited talks, delivered by renowned experts, offered deep insights into various facets of communication technology. The conference's banquet was also a memorable event that featured a lottery with numerous prizes and an array of traditional Chinese artistic performances, adding a cultural touch to the conference experience.

Overall, ICCC 2024 was a resounding success, combining technical excellence with cultural enrichment and leaving participants with new insights and renewed enthusiasm for the future of communication technology.

CHAPTER REPORT

Telecom 2024, Ecuador

Celebrating the World Telecommunication and Information Society Day

by Román Lara-Cueva, IEEE ComSoc Ecuador Chapter Chair

Attendees of Telecom 2024, Ecuador.

Telecom 2024 marked a significant milestone in our celebration of World Telecommunication and Information Society Day on May 17th. Telecom 2024 was organized by the IEEE ComSoc Ecuador Chapter in collaboration with the IEEE ComSoc Student Chapter of Universidad de las Fuerzas Armadas — ESPE, this fifth edition featured insightful discussions by 11 esteemed researchers on topics such as 6G, IoT, and Agile Methodologies. A highlight of the event was the Innovation and Intelligent Communication Systems Panel.

Telecom 2024 was hosted by the IEEE ComSoc Ecuador Chapter and Universidad de las Fuerzas Armadas — ESPE in Sangolquí, near Quito.

We had the participation of researchers from Harvard, UDLA, EPN, and ESPE universities. We started with Dr. Fernando Almeida, Senior Member IEEE, who spoke on the topic "Reconfigurable Intelligent Surfaces (RIS)." Then Dr. Henry Carvajal, Senior Member IEEE, spoke on the topic "Towards the Sixth Generation (6G) of Mobile Networks: Emerging Technologies," during which new algorithms and protocols were discussed. MSc. Lourdes de la Cruz then explored "Agile Methodologies for Project Management in Telecommunications."

A notable highlight of the Telecom 2024 was the session led by Dr. Miguel Gutiérrez Gaitán, IEEE ComSoc Chair of Chile. His talk on "Wireless Communications for IoT in Aquatic Environments" was part of the ComSoc Ecuador-Chile Sister Chapter Program, empha-

sizing the cross-border collaboration and knowledge exchange within the ComSoc community.

In an increasingly interconnected world, innovation in telecommunications plays a crucial role in technological advancement and socioeconomic development. This was demonstrated during the panel discussion at Telecom 2024, focused on "Innovation and Intelligent Communication Systems." The panel was Moderated by Dr. Román Lara, IEEE ComSoc Ecuador Chair. The panel featured an MSc. Diego Loor, CEO of CIEMTELCOM, MS. Juan Diego Jiménez, CEO of FoderjEstratégico, MSc. Daniel Triviño, General Coordinator of Entrepreneurship and Innovation at ESPE, MS. María Fernanda Redrobán, Technical Expert of Arcotel, and Dr. Martha Cecilia Paredes, Senior Member IEEE. These esteemed panelists explored the topic from various angles, addressing technological innovation, business strategies, public policies, and the vision of ComSoc. This enriching discussion highlighted how innovative telecommunications are essential for continuous technological progress and socioeconomic growth, providing valuable insights into how to tackle challenges and seize opportunities in this dynamic field.

The event concluded with a cocktail reception attended by ComSoc Ecuador members, industry representatives, and special guests. We had an impressive attendance of 100 people from various universities, including Universidad San Francisco de Quito, Universidad Politécnica Salesiana, Universidad de las Fuerzas Armadas — ESPE, Escuela Politécnica Nacional, Escuela Politécnica del Chimborazo, and Universidad de las Américas. Additionally, industry representatives from CIEMTELCOM and the Corporación Nacional de Telecomunicaciones participated. This networking opportunity further strengthened relationships across academia and industry, fostering collaboration that promises to drive future advancements in telecommunications.

Looking ahead, Telecom continues to set high expectations for the future of telecommunications. Building on the success of Telecom 2024, we anticipate further advancements in 6G networks, IoT integration, and the application of agile methodologies in project management within the field. As technology evolves, there is a growing emphasis on sustainable and innovative solutions that enhance connectivity and efficiency across various sectors. The collaboration between academia, industry leaders, and regulatory bodies, exemplified in events like Telecom, will be crucial in shaping the landscape of telecommunications, driving forward digital transformation and socio-economic development globally. By leveraging emerging technologies and fostering interdisciplinary partnerships, Telecom aims to spearhead new initiatives that address global challenges and optimize the benefits of connectivity for communities worldwide.

CHAPTER REPORT

Unveiling the Future: Lecture of Ian Akyildiz at KCST, Kuwait

by Ali Alfayly, Treasurer, and Abdullah Alqallaf, Chair, IEEE ComSoc Kuwait Chapter

On the 28th of May 2024, the IEEE Kuwait Communications Society (ComSoc) Chapter, in partnership with the Kuwait College of Science and Technology (KCST), hosted an electrifying event that left attendees buzzing with excitement and curiosity. The occasion? A special lecture by the legendary Prof. Ian Akyildiz, a global figure on wireless communications and 6G technologies.

A Warm Welcome and Campus Tour

The day kicked off with a warm reception at the Office of the President, where Prof. Akyildiz was greeted by a host of dignitaries and enthusiastic students. The energy was palpable as everyone eagerly anticipated the insights that Prof. Akyildiz was about to share. Following the reception, a tour of the KCST campus provided a glimpse into the state-of-the-art facilities and innovative projects that make the college a hub of technological advancement.

Unlocking the Future: The 6G Enabled Metaverse

Prof. Akyildiz's presentation, titled "Unlocking the Future: Exploring Multi-Sensory Immersive and AI in the 6G Enabled Metaverse," was nothing short of enlightening. He delved into the transformative capabilities of 6G technologies, painting a vivid picture of the future. Among the key technologies he discussed were Terahertz Band Communication, Reconfigurable Intelligent Surfaces, and the Internet of Nano Things, all of which are set to revolutionize the way we connect and communicate.

Applications in the Metaverse

One of the most captivating segments of the lecture focused on the potential applications of 6G technologies in the Metaverse. Imagine holographic-type communication and multi-sensory media becoming a part of our daily lives — this is the future that 6G promises. Prof. Akyildiz also touched upon the significant research challenges that lie ahead, particularly in the realms of high-precision networks and semantic communication.

Networking Brunch and Future Collaborations

The event concluded with a heartfelt expression of gratitude to Prof. Akyildiz, followed by group photos that captured the spirit of collaboration and innovation. A networking brunch provided the perfect opportunity for attendees to discuss the day's insights and forge new connections.

From the left: Dr. Ali Afalyly, Kuwait Chapter Treasurer; Dr. Abdullah Alqallaf, ComSoc Kuwait Chapter Chair; Prof. Ian Akyildiz; and Prof. Khaled AlBaqaeen, President of the College.

This landmark event symbolized a significant achievement in the ongoing partnership between IEEE ComSoc and KCST, setting the stage for future collaborations in wireless communication and AI.

As the world stands on the brink of a new era in digital communications, events like these not only inspire but also remind us of the boundless possibilities that lie ahead.

Stay tuned for more exciting developments from IEEE ComSoc and KCST!

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