AI summary

Fireside Chat: Future of Connectivity in an Age of AI, 5G and Satellite

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Fireside Chat: Future of Connectivity in an Age of AI, 5G and Satellite

Wednesday, 20 May 2026

Participants

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Summary

The session explored the future of connectivity through the lens of Space 42's strategic initiatives and technological innovations. Space 42's name and origins were linked to its parent company G42, which focuses on AI and data infrastructure, and its merger with Bayanat and Yahsat, combining expertise in geospatial intelligence and sovereign space infrastructure. The four strategic pillars laid out for Space 42 included being a leader in non-terrestrial networks (NTN), secure connectivity, geospatial data, and geospatial AI platforms. The unique synergy created by combining geospatial expertise and cutting-edge AI was highlighted as a differentiator, enabling efficient satellite operations and diverse industry applications.

The discussion delved into Space 42's GIQ platform, originally designed for geospatial data analysis, which has since evolved into a versatile AI platform applicable across industries. AI's role in satellite operations was outlined in three dimensions: automating operational functions, optimising scarce network resources, and introducing new use cases like over-the-top (OTT) applications. The integration of edge computing and AI in satellites was emphasised as a solution to bandwidth limitations, allowing efficient data transmission. These capabilities were linked to broader trends of satellite and terrestrial network convergence, driven by 3GPP standards and the demand for seamless connectivity in the evolving 5G and 6G ecosystems.

The session also addressed infrastructure and partnerships. Space 42's global network includes gateways concentrated in the UAE and Europe, supporting diverse services like mobile satellite and broadband. The company's approach to satellite procurement prioritises flexibility, leveraging technologies like software-defined radios to avoid being locked into outdated systems. Partnerships, such as those with Skylo and the Equitise venture with Viasat, were cited as critical to delivering cost-efficient and scalable connectivity. Equitise was positioned as a neutral LEO constellation focused on affordability and operator collaboration. The session concluded with a forward-looking vision of Space 42's ambitions to lead in secure NTN connectivity, AI-driven geospatial services, and satellite-based data solutions.

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Takeaways

AI and Satellite Synergy for Enhanced Connectivity

The integration of AI into satellite operations is revolutionising connectivity. Space42's advancements in geospatial AI platforms optimise satellite resources, enhance decision-making, and enable diverse use cases, from IoT to pipeline monitoring.

Convergence of Satellite and Telecom Through Standards

The integration of satellite technology with terrestrial telecom, driven by 3GPP standardisation, is reshaping connectivity. This convergence enables seamless 5G and future 6G networks, offering blanket coverage and reducing customer churn for mobile network operators.

Cost-Effective and Sustainable Satellite Solutions

Space42, in collaboration with partners like Viasat, is prioritising affordability and sustainability in satellite services. Their innovative approach, including software-defined satellites and multi-platform compatibility, aims to deliver scalable and cost-efficient global connectivity.

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