Wireless Networking in TV White Space

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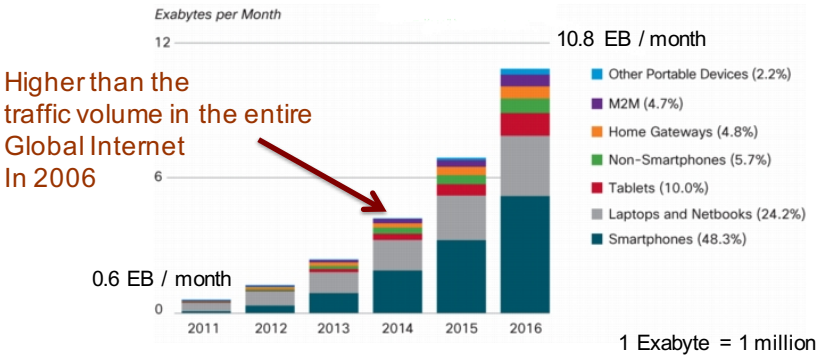
Mobile Data Usage



1 Exabyte = 1 million Terabyte

Forecast of Global Mobile Data Traffic
Source: CISCO VNI Mobile

Exponential growth in mobile traffic. Need for additional spectrum. But no significant spectrum unallocated.

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Opportunity: TV Bands

- Significant amount of RF spectrum allocated for over-the-air (OTA) TV broadcasting are not efficiently used.
- TV broadcasts use VHF/UHF bands roughly 50-800MHz (not continuous).
  - This spectrum provides very good propagation quality for wireless communications. Thus, attractive.
- Not all TV channels are used at every location at all times. Also, after the recent analog to digital transition TV broadcasts use less spectrum.
  - Part of the previously used TV spectrum has already been consolidated and auctioned off (channels 52-69, 698-806MHz).
  - But a large amount of ill-utilized TV spectrum still available: Lower VHF channels 2-6 (54-72, 76-88 MHz), upper VHF channels 7-13 (174-216 MHz) and UHF channels 14-51 (470- 698MHz) with the exception of channel 37 reserved for radio astronomy.

TV White Space (TVWS)

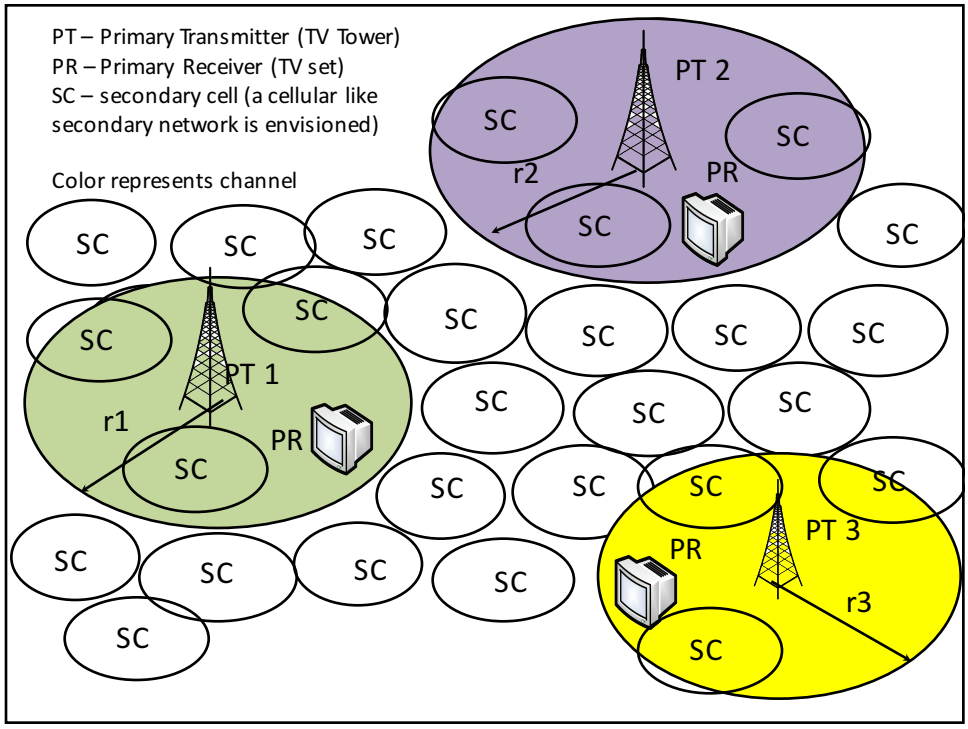
- TVWS = Unused TV spectrum over time and space.
- TVWS spectrum is still legally licensed to TV broadcasters.
  - Similar situation all over the world (not a US centric issue).
- Similar situation exists for other ill-utilized spectrum, e.g., various radar bands (e.g., 2.7-3.6GHz)

Opportunity and Challenge

- *Opportunity*: Large amount of fallow spectrum attractive for wireless communication.
- *Challenge*: It is already licensed. How to create new regulations and technologies to support wireless communications in this spectrum band that do not interfere with TV reception.

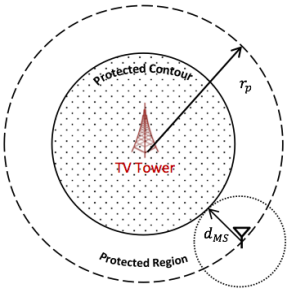
De-Regulation

- Regulators worldwide (e.g., FCC in USA, Ofcom in UK) are promoting a new form of unlicensed use in the TVWS.
  - e.g., FCC ruling in 2008 in USA.
- Unlicensed use, but incumbent protected.
  - Not exactly "free for all" like WiFi.
  - Sometimes called "lightly licensed."
- Incumbents are the licensees. They are called "primaries." Unlicensed devices are called "secondaries."
- Basic access rule: secondary communications cannot interfere with primaries (i.e., TV reception).



Secondary Operation in TVWS

- Secondary operation permitted so long as no interference at the TV receivers.
- Define a *primary protection region.* (Roughly the coverage area of the TV tower, plus some – depending on the signal strength of the secondary transmitters.)
- General rule: Do not operate in the same TV channel within the protection region.



Determination of Protection Region

- TV transmitter location, channel, tx power, antenna characteristics (height, gain) are known.
- This provides a coverage contour defined by a distance within which TV signals are received at a power higher than a specified threshold.
  - This distance could be computed via path loss modeling.
- Add to that an additional no-talk distance d_{MS} such that interference produced by any secondary transmitter will be below a specified threshold.
  - This can again be computed via similar modeling.

TVWS Spectrum Database

- These databases use sophisticated propagation models and terrain data to estimate whether a specific TV channel is available for secondary use at a given location.
  - In other words, whether this location is outside the protection region of all TV transmitters operating in that channel.
- Example databases:
  - Google: http://www.google.org/spectrum/whitespace/index.html
  - Spectrum Bridge: http://whitespaces.spectrumbridge.com/WhiteSpaceSearch/interactive-map.aspx and http://whitespaces.spectrumbridge.com/whitespaces/home.aspx
  - UW SpecObs (research tool): http://specobs.ee.washington.edu/