

Email of 20-5-07
Reply from Paul Budde

Dear Phil,

Thank you very much for your letter. I will certainly publish it, as you suggest.

First of all, I was glad to read that you don't support a blanket 'no' to BPL, and that you don't oppose the technology if it can be developed within the regulatory framework, with the appropriate limitations in respect of radio interference.

I apologise for not having recognised your proper position correctly.

A couple of other things

There have been no BuddeComm Summits or meetings on the subject of BPL, other than the ones that your Society's representatives have attended. While we do organise similar Roundtables on other topics, such as Triple Play, FttH, etc, these events are not significant from a BPL perspective.

It was at those BPL-related Summits, at which your representatives were present, that I suggested organising follow-up discussions between the industry and the radio amateurs. I repeated this invitation in follow-up emails, but the feedback I received was that there was no interest in pursuing the matter.

There would obviously be no costs involved in such meetings (other than, perhaps, travel costs etc). My aim was to find possible solutions for the radio amateurs in the regions where trials and pilots are going to take place.

The industry has been able to organise meetings of this sort with other HF operators, at which solutions have been found for the potential problems posed by the trials and pilots.

On that issue, I do not believe that BPL could become a commercially viable service if it is not able to operate within the international and national standards that are set for radio interference. I am not advocating any special rules for BPL; I am advocating cutting through all the academic arguments that have been put forward and trying out BPL in an everyday, commercial situation - to assess what interference there actually is; how serious it is; and what, if anything, can be done about it.

I am fully aware of the concerns expressed by the Australian emergency services etc; however they are willing to work with the utilities to thoroughly explore the situation.

If radio interference is within the regulatory limits, BPL should not be treated any differently from other technologies. If it can't work within these limits, it will not obtain regulatory clearance - it's that simple.

In both the US and Europe the industry is able to find ways to coexist with other HF users. Both the FCC and the EU have opened their doors to BPL, while at the same time taking into account the necessary restrictions regarding radio interference.

To date, BPL trials in Australia have not provided a good indication of the real emission levels to be anticipated by commercial BPL deployments. The 45 Mb trial deployments monitored by the ACA did not incorporate interference minimisation features included in the 200 Mb equipment. Also, the ACA's testing timeframe did not provide for testing at interval power levels. This is why the pilot in Hobart is so important, as it is based on the latest 200 Mb BPL technology.

I am sure that the HF services will be right on top of Aurora if it can't operate within the ACA guidelines. And if this happens, it will then be up to Aurora to either find a solution or abandon the initiative.

What I am saying is let's learn from this - let's see if we can come up with some clever solutions.

If we get it right we might also be able to take the lead and export, instead of always being on the receiving end of imported developments.

I believe that our regulatory system is robust enough to manage such initiatives. I have complete confidence in the ACA to properly police these trials and pilots so that they do not cause serious problems to other users of the spectrum.

And I am very much in favour of Australian companies being at the leading edge of new developments.

Why not give it a go? If we fail, at least we have tried.

Best Regards,
Paul Budde