

3G Third generation (3G) is the generic term used for the next generation of mobile communications systems. These have been created to support the effective delivery of a range of multimedia services. In addition, they provide more efficient systems for the over-the-air transmission of existing services, such as voice, text and data that are available today.

Developed by the global GSM community as its chosen path for 3G evolution, UMTS is one of the International Telecommunications Union's (ITU's) family of third-generation mobile communications systems. UMTS uses a W-CDMA air interface, which lead some to refer to the technology as simply W-CDMA, creating confusion in the marketplace.

To alleviate this confusion and to highlight the backward compatibility of the system with second generation GSM, the GSM Association now refers to the range of high-speed multimedia services that can be delivered to users via mobile networks using UMTS/W-CDMA systems such as 3GSM, rather than simply the air interface technology.

3GPP The global 3G Partnership Project (3GPP), a collaboration of telecommunications standards bodies, is the organisation through which much of the technical specifications are devised. The GSM Association is a market representation Partner of the 3GPP, as such it provides the 3GPP with market advice and a consensus view of market requirements from the operator community.

In summary, the GSM Association's vision of 3GSM is based on today's GSM standard, but evolved, extended and enhanced to include an additional radio air interface, better suited for high speed and multimedia data services. This system will enable users of current second generation GSM wireless networks to migrate easily to the new third generation services, with minimal disruption.

The use of the W-CDMA air interface significantly increases the data transfer rate of GSM networks, offering average downlink rates of around 300 kbit/s.

TV and video on demand, high-speed multimedia data services and mobile Internet access are just a few of the offerings available to users. 3GSM expands the potential for content-rich information and communication services, as well as providing enhanced capacity for traditional voice services. 3GSM bridges the gap between the wireless world and the computing/Internet world, creating the possibility of seamless inter-operation between the two.