Telecom Egypt

Title

The Network of the Global Economy Under the Sea

Abstract

Few may think that satellites are responsible for carrying international traffic, but the cables have proven to offer much larger capacity for far less cost. It is the pipes on the ocean floor that form the backbone of the world's modern economy. The traffic running on international cables accounts for 99% of all international data traffic, whether they are terrestrial inter-borders or laid underwater.

The first successful attempt ever to build a subsea telegraph cable was in the 1850s. And many more have followed; today there are several hundreds of subsea cables in service globally. Almost all coastal countries are connected to subsea cable systems. As per TeleGeography, as of early 2025, there were about 570 in-service subsea cable systems and 81 planned. Nevertheless, deployment of undersea systems is highly expensive, complicated, and time-consuming—but once built, they are very reliable and offer immense capacity.

This presentation provides an overview on the subsea cables industry. It covers some statistics on the used international bandwidth, historical milestones, and information on subsea cables construction, geography, ownership evolvement, challenges and their remedies. It sheds light on Telecom Egypt involvement as a key subsea cable player in the region. Positioned as a leading subsea cable operator in the region and with a history dating back about 170 years to the deployment of telegraph subsea cables connecting Africa, Europe, and Asia, Telecom Egypt has arisen as a trusted hub linking the three continents.

Photo

Biography

Ola Khaled, Senior Manager of Business Development for International Network and Digital Infrastructure, Telecom Egypt.

With a remarkable experience spanning over two decades in the fields of business development and international customers' relations, Ola Khaled is currently holding the position of International Business Development Senior Manager for International Network and Digital Infrastructure at Telecom Egypt. Since 2016, she laid the foundations of the International Business Development Department, where she developed new business opportunities and expanded the brand market reach. Further, she oversees client-relations and sales management, recommends new products or services and is actively involved in industry organizations such as SubOptic and ICPC. Passionate about raising awareness on the importance of the subsea industry on different occasions, Ola has developed and presented several papers over the past years, including an overview of the subsea industry and its importance to the world economy, Egypt's Commitment for Colossal Infrastructure and Regulations Refurbishment, introduction to ICE, and Egypt's enabling infrastructure. In late 2023, Ms. Khaled organized the first SubOptic Symposium in Egypt and followed with the second edition entitled WAVE Egypt in 2025. Those successful symposia contributed to supporting and inspiring students and professionals interested in the subsea cables industry. Ola holds an eMBA degree, Professional Masters in Telecommunications Engineering, and a BSc in Electronics and Communications Engineering.