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IPTV service implementation to take center stage at GMI 2008

MSF fills in test scenario detail as the deadline approaches

Fremont, CA, September 2nd 2008 – With all eyes on GMI 2008's Q4 launch, the MultiService Forum (MSF) today released further details of their six chosen test scenarios. Reflecting strong public interest and uptake of image and video services, there will be a strong emphasis on IMS support for high value IPTV services, with one scenario dedicated to assessing the maturity of existing IPTV solutions and identifying gaps in the current industry standards. The other five scenarios will address end-to-end session control, end-to-end QoS, location-based services, service oriented architecture and management. Also announced was the updated list of participants, now including: Acme Packet, Alcatel-Lucent, Codenomicon, Empirix, Fujitsu, Huawei, Motorola, MuDynamics, NEC, Nokia-Siemens Networks, Nortel, OSI, Sonus, Spirent, Starent, Tekelec, Tektronix, Telchemy, Teles and ZTE.

"Early critics described IMS as a wonder technology in search of a killer application" commented Roger Ward, Head of Standards Implementation, BT Design and President of the MSF. "That killer application turns out to be 'service integration' and IMS will provide the flexibility for network services to move with the market just as nimbly as Internet services. IPTV is a good example of a new wave service that operators seek to deliver on a variety of underlying infrastructures and we anticipate major media interest in our GMI2008 IPTV-related scenarios".

IMS based implementations of IPTV offer re-usability of network investment and the potential to integrate with other services, but there is still work to be done on developing IPTV test and measurement and monitoring tools. GMI 2008 will validate the functionality and interoperability of IPTV implementations as well as IPTV service management solutions that analyze the quality of the IPTV service offerings. With the inclusion of ATIS IPTV Interoperability Forum (ATIS-IIF) test plans, GMI 2008 will also address the authentication and initialization of Customer Premise equipment, and QoS metrics for IPTV services.

End-to-end session control is the base scenario of GMI2008 and will address access independent session control across a range of traditional and emerging access technologies including WiMAX, 3GPP, 3GPP2, and broadband.

Building on the base scenario, end-to-end QoS is being addressed for the first time, following the MSF's adoption of ETSI TISPAN NGNR2 QOS related specifications. Until now most tests have focused on the SIP session signaling without worrying about the associated QoS but GMI 2008 will address this gap.

The Location Based Services scenario addresses the challenge that NGN terminals can be mobile and attach to different points in the access network such that their physical location is no longer linked to the caller line identity. The solution adopted by the MSF is designed to work synergistically with that of other organizations such as NENA, and will make use of standards already in place.

Service Oriented Architecture (SOA) is an architecture paradigm that enables components from both IMS and non-IMS infrastructures to be used as part of new application/service developments. SOA is vital as it allows carriers to offer a wide range of services. The GMI2008 event will focus on the latest MSF implementation agreement which defines a profile for the interface between the SOA gateway and web services applications, with an initial focus on Parlay X APIs but plans to include additional APIs in future.

The Management scenario addresses a number of issues such as remote management of an IPTV set-top box, gathering VoIP performance management statistics and the provision of flexible charging mechanisms.

“GMIs are very important to us” according to Naseem Khan, Principal Member of Technical Staff, of Verizon. “These events advance the implementation of industry standards and are very useful in assessing the maturity of IMS and other NGN technologies. IP video is a particularly important area of GMI 2008 and Verizon wants to know what additional network components and interfaces are required to support IMS-based video. Verizon also wants to explore the architecture and potential of SOA since it allows carriers to offer a wide range of services. The importance of QoS is self-evident: it enables service differentiation and good QoE is mandatory for multimedia services such as IP Video.”

Verizon’s laboratory facilities at Waltham, Mass, will be one of the host sites for this year’s interoperability testing activity.

Zhang Hao, MSF Lead, China Mobile commented: “GMI 2008 is very important to China Mobile. The end-to-end QoS test scenario in GMI is the best way to validate QoS solutions within an IMS Core network, especially under the demanding conditions of long-distance roaming environments. Joining this event allows China Mobile to establish a test network with other host-sites and that gives us the ‘real-life’ roaming and nomadic environment necessary to help accelerate interoperability between different carriers. .”

About GMI 2008

GMI 2008 – the Global MSF Interoperability event – will link major carrier labs on three continents in a major demonstration of multi-vendor interoperability between a significant number of NGN elements supporting Implementation Agreements developed in support of the MSF Release 4 Architecture and practical deployment scenarios of interest to major carriers. GMI 2008 uses a networked distributed test environment comprising five host sites: Verizon, NCS and UNH-IOL in the USA, BT/Vodafone in Europe, and China Mobile in Asia.

About the MSF

The MultiService Forum (MSF) is a global association of service providers, system suppliers and test equipment vendors committed to developing and promoting open-architecture, multiservice Next Generation Networks. Founded in 1998, the MSF is an open-membership organization comprised of the world’s leading telecommunications companies. The MSF’s activities include developing Implementation Agreements, promoting worldwide compatibility and interoperability of network elements, and encouraging input to appropriate national and international standards bodies.

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