



USA PR contact:

Richard Williams
Zonic Group PR
rwilliams@ZonicGroup.com
+1 919-554-3532 or +1 919-523-0621

EMEA:

Mark Fox
Zonic PR EMEA
mfox@ZonicGroup.com
+44 (0) 870 760 9248
248110

Asia Pacific:

Shirley Yeh
Zonic PR Asia
syeh@ZonicGroup.com
+8621 5115 4551 x 1221 or +44 7836

MSF Launches NGN Certification Program

Iometrix Test Labs Chosen as MSF Certification Partner

24 July 2007, Amsterdam, Netherlands—The much awaited MSF (MultiService Forum) Certification Program was given final approval by the MSF Board at the MSF quarterly meeting in Amsterdam last week. In looking to deliver such an ambitious program to the industry, the MSF selected Iometrix as the host test lab, with an initial pilot program set to deliver results as early as Q4 2007.

The MSF Certification Program will focus on areas of critical interest to both vendor and service provider members of the MSF, addressing key issues necessary to deliver multi-vendor practical open architecture solutions for Next Generation Networks (NGNs). The pilot program, scheduled for Q4 this year, will concentrate on verifying the technical components of RTCP implementations in media gateways and SIP end points, and the accuracy of the network statistics that they report. The RTP/RTCP protocol addresses the measurement and reporting of network quality for real-time applications such as VoIP, and any differences in implementation or faulty reporting between the very large number and types of nodes running these protocols would seriously degrade the network operation and damage application performance.

Roger Ward, Office of the CTO, BT Group and President of the MSF, commented on the program's strategy: "Getting the variability out of RTCP implementations was the favourite starting point with our members for this programme, and working the detail of the pilot with a major test house such as Iometrix will establish the critical processes and procedures necessary to deliver a major ongoing MSF Certification Program to the industry. Subsequent stages, starting early next year, will address detailed aspects of SIP interconnect between two or more providers— and will follow naturally from this pilot phase."

The NGN network components subject to certification in the pilot phase include SIP endpoints and SIP phones, residential gateways (CPE), access gateways, trunking gateways, media servers and session border gateways. The test scenarios include point-to-point calls – initiating calls between software under test and emulated endpoint and verifying that basic RTCP jitter, delay, packet loss, packet duplication and short calls are reported correctly by the end systems – as well as complex calls, verifying that a mixer maintains the correct RTCP statistics for each RTP sessions it supports. Also, when a destination endpoint is changed, verifying that the endpoint clears the statistics for the old media path and reports the statistics accurately for the new media path.

"Real time protocol – RTP – and control protocol is a great starting point," according to Naseem Khan, Principal Member of Technical Staff at Verizon Labs. "Real time applications like VoIP and IPTV cannot be built on a weak foundation. MSF certification provides the glue to hold the whole NGN infrastructure together."

Chris Gallon, Head of Systems Engineering at Fujitsu Telecommunications Europe, added: "To be able to launch an NGN certification program within 12 months of the completion of GMI 2006 is more than we had hoped for. It is a testament to the progress that the industry has made and the drive of the [MSF] Forum. By providing a globally recognized and trusted certification program for Next Generation Network elements the MSF will help smooth the way for NGN deployments."

Bob Mandeville, President and Founder, Iometrix, stressed the urgency of this certification program: "It's sheer arithmetic: traditional telephony was built around barely a half dozen basic systems, whereas with VoIP, for example, we have literally hundreds of systems and suppliers. So there's a significant risk of non-conformance within any service provider network – let alone the problems of calls spanning multiple networks. The opportunity to use certified equipment is a major step towards seamless NGN coverage."

Registration for the initial pilot testing program opens immediately, and vendors are invited to contact Iometrix at msf-certification@iometrix.com by August 31st 2007. For further information visit the Iometrix website at: <http://www.iometrix.com/>

About the MSF

The MultiService Forum (MSF) is a global association of service providers and system suppliers committed to developing and promoting open-architecture, multiservice switching systems. 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, and encouraging input to appropriate national and international standards bodies. For more information about the MSF and its members, visit the MSF web site at <http://www.msforum.org/>

Editors Note

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