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MultiService Forum Gets Physical with Release 3 Architecture Specification

Boston, September 12, 2006 (Fall VON) – The MultiService Forum (MSF) today announced publication of its Release 3 Architecture, the first industry specification to describe physical implementations of IMS-enabled devices in real-world deployment scenarios that explicitly include first-generation VoIP SoftSwitches, PSTN interworking and evolution to a true IMS network. Building on existing work, the Release 3 Architecture refines the definition of key MSF Release 2 elements such as the Session Border Controller and also introduces a new class of user terminal, the IMS-aware SIP UA.

"The availability of the Release 3 Architecture specification provides a clear and compelling development road map for any company serious about the implementation of an IMS-based network," said Roger Ward, Office of the CTO, British Telecom and President of the MSF. "This is a major milestone for the MultiService Forum and the industry in general."

The MSF's Release 3 Architecture specification outlines how carriers can integrate both IMS and MSF R2 network elements within a single converged network domain. By taking account of both the 3GPP IP Multimedia System (IMS) architecture and existing deployed core network wireline VoIP systems, the MSF R3 specification reflects the reality of wireless-wireline networks today and in the foreseeable future.

"Given the industry's intense effort to define an all embracing Next Generation Network (NGN) architecture and service framework, we felt it was important to collaborate with other major players across the industry to provide a significant practical level of implementation detail early in the development process, said Stuart Walker, Principal Architecture and Technology Advisor of Leapstone Systems and chairman of the MSF Architecture Working Group. "One key advantage of the MSF approach is the pragmatic way the Release 3 Reference Architecture anticipates the degree to which the industry has already begun to converge on such an architecture."

Further detail of the MSF's Release 3 Architecture specification is now available on the MSF's website at http://www.msforum.org/techinfo/approved.shtml.

The goal of the MSF is to promote multi-vendor interoperability to accelerate the practical deployment of Next Generation Networks. To this end, the MSF is hosting its Global MSF Interoperability (GMI) 2006 event October 16 – 27. GMI 2006 is the industry's only multinational, distributed, interactive test bed that will verify key interoperability aspects of NGN/IMS implementations. The publication of the MSF Release 3 Architecture specification is a key milestone in the build up to GMI 2006. Five of the world's top carriers--BT, KT, NTT, Verizon and Vodafone-- along with world-class testing and research facilities at UNH-IOL and ETRI, will host the event, which is sponsored by Nortel. The hosts will provide world-class networked test facilities spanning three continents. Comprising a massive 'real network' trial of the MSF IMS (IP Multimedia System) -compatible Release 3 architecture, this event is critically important to any carrier or vendor committed to building or implementing infrastructure elements compatible with IMS.

About The MultiService Forum

The MultiService Forum 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. For more information about the MSF and its members, visit the MSF web site at http://www.msforum.org/.