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Topics: Service Provider Strategies

AT&T, Verizon, Windstream join MEF to advance Ethernet interconnection

April 27, 2015 | By Sean Buckley

AT&T (NYSE: T), Verizon (NYSE: VZ) and Windstream are among a group of Tier 1 service providers that are joining the Metro Ethernet Forum (MEF) to drive the next phase of the organization's Ethernet Interconnect Points (EIP) project to develop common guidelines service providers can use to interconnect their Ethernet networks when pursuing out-of-territory opportunities.

To help project participants agree on a common interconnection approach using MEF specifications, the EIP project will provide feedback on standard prototypes.

EIPs will consist of all elements of Ethernet interconnection--including all the requirements needed to provide a customer with an end-to-end Ethernet service spanning multiple operators. Specifically, the MEF will address location selection, External Network-to-Network Interface (ENNI) parameters and the alignment of business processes.

Demand for implementation guidelines for multi-carrier environments continues to ramp. According to the MEF, there are over 50 current MEF specifications for Carrier Ethernet architectures, connectivity services and service lifecycles--and many more in the pipeline to cover the emerging area of Lifecycle Service Orchestration (LSO).



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The EIP project is developing use cases representing topologies and service characteristics typically used by carriers that interconnect their Carrier Ethernet services with one another to create end-to-end Carrier Ethernet services.

Having a standard method for Ethernet interconnection is a key element for large carriers like AT&T and Verizon, both of which have been expanding their national and international Ethernet footprints.

"This effort is another step towards AT&T's larger vision to transition to an all Ethernet and IP network," said Dan Blemings, director of Product Marketing Management, AT&T Mobile & Business Solutions, in a release. "With this project we are creating a more expansive Ethernet footprint to better serve our customers' rapidly growing consumption of both wireline and wireless bandwidth."

Verizon echoed a similar sentiment that the MEF's efforts will help create a standard framework to interconnect with other providers across their global footprint.

"The MEF and its Ethernet Interconnect Points initiative is playing a critical role in creating an environment where Carrier Ethernet providers are collaborating to create a standardized industry framework for the interconnection of Ethernet services on a global basis," said Matthew Duckworth, director of Ethernet Product Marketing, Verizon Global Wholesale and a co-chair of the MEF's global marketing committee, in a release.

But this effort is also relevant to Tier 2 providers like Windstream, which offers Ethernet services on a domestic basis to medium and large businesses through its ILEC and CLEC subsidiaries.

At the same time, the EIP effort will also create guidelines for Ethernet equipment providers with the rapid prototyping environment and Carrier Ethernet (CE) 2.0 certified equipment. Hosted by the University of New Hampshire Interoperability Lab (UNH-IOL), the rapid prototyping environment will be remotely accessed by project participants to assess the implementation of draft sections of the EIP Implementation Guide using CE 2.0 certified equipment with their respective configurations.

A number of MEF members--including Alcatel-Lucent (NYSE: ALU), Canoga Perkins, Ciena, Juniper Networks, and RAD--have provided CE 2.0 certified equipment for the rapid prototyping aspect of the project.

In addition, the MEF is looking to standardize business processes such as product catalogs, service ordering and performance reporting across EIPs. The project collaborates closely with other projects in the MEF Service Operations Committee.

For more:

- see the [release](#)

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