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Current Analysis Unveils IMS Deployment Model

STERLING, Va. – July 20, 2005 –The IP Multimedia Subsystem (IMS) has emerged as the architectural foundation for a new service delivery platform and the primary mechanism for convergence of fixed and mobile network. As both large and small equipment makers line up to demonstrate their IMS strategies and portfolios, the industry itself remains far from agreement in what constitutes an IMS deployment. To provide a benchmark for comparing and contrasting early deployments of IMS functional modules, Current Analysis has developed a model for determining a baseline IMS deployment, which is described in the recent research report: “The Current Analysis IMS Model: Defining an IP Multimedia Subsystem Deployment.”

In the report, Carrier IP Telephony Infrastructure Senior Analyst Joe McGarvey states “A legitimate IMS deployment must contain at least three specific IMS functional modules, as well as the interfaces that enable these modules to communicate with each other and with other components in the network. The three modules, as defined by the 3GPP specification, are the Serving-Call Session Control Function (S-CSCF), the Home Subscriber Server (HSS) and at least one Application Server (AS). While each of these functional components provide crucial performance attributes for multimedia communications, all three – connected through the IMS-prescribed interfaces -- must be present in order to provide even the most fundamental services.

Serving CSCF: The S-CSCF is one of three CSCFs in the IMS architecture and the major component in the signalling control layer of the architecture. Every session that a SIP end-point initiates must pass through the control of the S-CSCF. Among its many duties are SIP registration, call control, call routing, enforcing session access control, communications with the HSS, and the coordination of evoking services located on application servers. The S-CSCF is obviously the heart of the control layer and its inclusion in any IMS deployment is essential.

HSS: An evolution of the HLR of mobile networks, the HSS is a central repository of subscriber information, including location information, security information, user preferences and a list of services that the user has authorization to access. Without an HSS or common database, each application must keep track of a separate set of subscriber data, a situation that discourages the reuse of network resources and prevents intermingling of multiple applications/services.

AS: The application server is a SIP-based device that hosts and executes services. These application sources are accessed through interaction with the S-CSCF through the IMS Service Control (ISC) interface, which is SIP with a few extensions.

Just as listening to the radio requires a tuner, amplifier, and speakers all working in unison, service providers require the installation of an S-CSCF, HSS, and AS if user A is going to communicate with user B over an IMS infrastructure. Only when all three of these functional modules are working together can service providers reap the baseline benefits of an IMS architecture, which include the ability to utilize a single session control layer and subscriber database to deliver multiple services.”

A copy of the report “The Current Analysis IMS Model: Defining an IP Multimedia Subsystem Deployment” can be obtained by contacting pr@currentanalysis.com

Press contacts:

Joe McGarvey
Senior Analyst, Carrier IP Telephony
Phone: +1 631-321-6560
E-mail: jmcgarvey@currentanalysis.com

Chalise E. Zolezzi
Director of Public Relations
Phone: +1 858-729-5287
Mobile: +1 858-692-9034
E-mail: czolezzi@currentanalysis.com

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