

A cut above

ITS enables network operator differentiation through value-added services

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WHO'S CALLING YOUR KIDS?

If you're the parent of a cell phone-carrying child, this is one thing you definitely want to know. But it's not the only thing. It is also important to keep track of where outbound calls are going, and at what time of day (or night) the phone is being used. This kind of oversight helps protect your children. It can also keep your monthly wireless bill from going through the roof.

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Arshad Syed, CEO, ITS

Fortunately, a comprehensive parental-control offering from Integrated Telecom Solutions (ITS)—one of about 25 value-added services the company has developed for network providers—is now available. One customer, Rogers Wireless in Canada, offers the service under the name Call Manager.

Here’s an excerpt from the Rogers website: “With Call Manager, you gain incredible control over the usage of wireless phones in your family by setting up various rules. You, as the account holder, can create rules that control access based on time of day, day of the week, specific dates, area codes, and specific phone numbers ... You provide all the independence you’re ready to give.” This peace of mind is available for just CAN\$5 (about US\$4.50) a month per line.

SUBSCRIBER VOLUME AND ARPU

The beauty of this ITS product is that it addresses the two most important drivers in the mobile communications industry with a single solution. CEO Arshad Syed illustrated the point with a look at the domestic landscape.

“Mobile phone penetration in the United States is around 75 percent, so the market is clearly getting saturated,” he said. “In order to stay competitive, operators must focus on increasing the number of subscribers and

also growing average revenue per user, or ARPU.” With some 220 million wireless subscribers out of a U.S. population of approximately 300 million, Syed asks, only semi-rhetorically, “Who are the other 80 million?”

The answer, he proposes, is younger children and elderly citizens. The ITS parental-control solution targets the former segment in a bid to increase the number of subscribers. It also contributes to higher ARPU. “Five dollars a month might not sound like much, but it really adds up,” noted Syed. “Just a bundle of two or three carefully selected, value-added solutions from ITS may result in a 10 to 15 percent increase in ARPU for the mobile operator.”

BOOSTING VALUE

ITS develops solutions that mobile operators can deploy to satisfy subscriber demands, enhance value, and quickly add services to any network. Running exclusively on the HP NonStop (and soon the HP Integrity NonStop) platform, they fall into five general categories:

- **Enhanced Calling Name** solutions add value to services that subscribers already use. An example is Virtual Caller ID, which provides missed-call notification even if the phone was turned off at the time of the call.
- **Intelligent Number Translation** solutions reduce operational costs and increase marketing effectiveness for service providers. This category includes Virtual Home Environment, which enables subscribers to dial the same number whether they are in their own country or abroad.
- **Convergent Services Charging** solutions enable mobile operators to optimize the value of their investment in billing and prepaid systems.
- **Optimal Call Management** solutions are designed to give individual subscribers and owners of group accounts total flexibility in setting the treatment of incoming and outgoing calls and messages. The parental-control solution previously described falls into this category.
- **Virtual Mobile Exchange** solutions allow communities of enterprises or consumers to form distinct groups of subscribers in a virtual PBX environment.



TRUE DIFFERENTIATION

These solutions all have one thing in common: They help carriers set themselves apart from the competition based on more than handset choice and pricing plans. “How mobile operators differentiate themselves is fundamental to their success,” said Syed. “This is really where ITS and HP play a role. We sell them value-added services that they can customize to the needs of their subscribers, creating a unique offering in the marketplace.”

For Syed, availability is the most salient characteristic of the NonStop platform. “The mobile operators use ITS solutions to make money,” he stated flatly. “If people can’t make a call because the system is down, that means a big revenue loss for the operator. This is why I feel so comfortable that we are selling our solutions on the NonStop system.” Anecdotally, Syed adds that some ITS customers “complain” that they have not had a single minute of outage since installing the system: “They tell me, ‘Our operations personnel actually forgot how to turn the system on, because they haven’t had to do it in the last three years.’”

If availability is at the head of the list, scalability is not far behind. “Many parts of the world where we play are fast-growing regions,” Syed continued. “Today they may start with an entry-level system; then tomorrow they may have to grow quickly. NonStop server scalability is true linear scalability. You don’t really find that in other servers on the market.”

As porting to the Integrity NonStop platform gets underway, Syed has his eye firmly fixed on performance and total cost of ownership. “We can already serve 4 million subscribers using a two-processor, entry-level NonStop S-series server,” he said. “When we move to the new Integrity NonStop NS3000AC server, we expect our price/performance to basically triple. No other server that’s commercially available in the industry can match this level.”

The ITS portfolio is broad and deep. “We have many competitors, but I have yet to find one that has everything we have,” concluded Syed. “Our solutions run on the most reliable platform in the industry—the NonStop server—and their ease of implementation translated directly into fast time to market. Taken together, it’s a very compelling value proposition for network operators that wish to differentiate themselves in an increasingly competitive marketplace.” ♦



Partnership benefits customers

The level of integration between HP and ITS is noteworthy. “HP resells all ITS solutions as HP products with HP part numbers,” explained ITS CEO Arshad Syed. “This is very attractive from a customer standpoint. For support, the customer makes one call—and it’s to HP, even for ITS products. I’ve had customers tell me: ‘We are buying from a global brand and a global company, but at the same time we get the agility of a small player that really understands how to add value to the subscriber experience.’ They really see it as the best of both worlds.”

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