



Views on the news - Special edition CTIA 2008

Title: Nokia Siemens Networks partners with Symmetricom:
Tier 1 Vendor packet-based backhaul solutions competition heats up

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Topic

Nokia Siemens Networks announces a partnership for packet synchronization with Symmetricom, giving it 1588v2 clocking via unicast and a stonger roadmap to Ethernet backhaul solutions

Opinion

Every Tier 1 infrastructure vendor with a stake in mobile networking (and one or two that lacked it) wanted to be positioned for the explosion in backhaul requirements fueled by the ramp up of 3G mobile data and video services. But in these economic times, the amount of investment these vendors wanted to do themselves...particularly before market timing and consensus for packet backhaul solutions were better established, was somewhat limited due to the conservative spending practices that have been adopted in the post bubble period. This is also what has enabled the multiple Tier 1 vendor partnering opportunities both Axerra and RAD have managed to enjoy to date.

But with industry consensus behind 1588v2 having come together more strongly, 2008 is shaping up to be the year in which all vendors will have more serious opportunity to start ramping up greater mobile backhaul deployment over packet networks. Synchronization concerns of mobile operators have been the single most important issue delaying faster roll out of such solutions to date. Synchronization plays a key role in maintaining call continuity while performing a successful handoff between cell sites, but it will become an even bigger – and more complex – issue as operators move toward 3GPPP LTE and 4G data rates, and new modulation schemes such as OFDM – which has as a variant option phase synchronization.

But at present, the time is right for the market to begin moving beyond the barrier of synchronization to enable the cost benefits of Ethernet interfaces and packet backhaul in support of 3G mobile data and video roll outs. Vendors like Ericsson and Nokia Siemens Networks are already rolling out Ethernet interfaces for new and existing 3G base stations – though it could take a long time for these to proliferate widely in the existing installed base.

Nokia Siemens Networks has announced its partnership with Symmetricom, which has significant experience with synchronization technologies to its credit. This announcement by NSN is likely to be only the first of more yet to come, as more than one Tier 1 vendors that waited for packet backhaul opportunities to bloom now will want to complement their internal development capabilities and accelerate time to market with strong synchronization capabilities.

NSN will be using Symmetricom's TimeProvider 5000, which is a 1 RU device (which NSN and Symmetricom have worked to fit into an NSN rack) for deployment at BSC and RNC sites. The TimeProvider 5000 provides unicast of synchronization information from RNC or BSC sites over Ethernet to NodeB/BSC sites.

Symmetricom has very significant experience in synchronization solutions, and is a very credible partner for NSN – which is taking an aggressive stance in the market with its solutions enabling operators to migrate as needed to packet based backhaul networks.

With this synchronization solution at its disposal, NSN has a major hurdle in development bypassed and out of the way.