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Siemens' IPTV Service Passes 75 Operator Deployments

Tier 2 and 3 Players Still the Most Prominent Adopters

by Jim Barthold

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While the size of Siemens' burgeoning IPTV customer base is growing, the size of the operators within that base is staying relatively constant with a little movement towards the bigger players, company executives said.

More than 75 regional operators in the U.S. and a number of worldwide PPTs are adopting and delivering IPTV using Siemens' SURPASS home entertainment portfolio that includes centralized back office management platforms, branding control and tools to tailor the look and feel of user interfaces. The portfolio is based heavily on IPTV software developed and delivered by Myrio, which Siemens purchased earlier this year and integrated into its Home Entertainment Solutions group.

"Our system maxes the middleware which brokers the service between the service provider's legacy services and next-gen services to the household," said Eddie Drake, Myrio's CTO. "Within our application server they create the services, set the channel lineups, set the packaging, set the pricing ...and provision services to the house."

Myrio had been accomplishing these same chores as a standalone company as a best-of-breed partner working with Siemens. Now the company and its software is "another part of Siemens' overall vision for home entertainment," Drake said. "We're a software component that forms the heart of the home entertainment product."

The heart of the IPTV market, meanwhile, is "at the hockey stick point where we're taking off," Drake said, estimating that Siemens' Myrio technology serves about 38 million access lines worldwide.

"The vast majority of those are your tier 3 independent U.S. operators," he conceded. "They can range anywhere from 5,000 access lines to north of 100,000 access lines. It's pretty significant in terms of subscriber count."

And getting more significant.

"Where a couple years ago we were seeing a lot of traction primarily in the tier 3 U.S. IOCs, today we're seeing a lot more traction in the tier 2s and tier 1s," he said.

Among the bigger players using Siemens equipment are Pioneer Telephone, Champaign Telephone, South Slope Cooperative Communications and Belgacom, a European PTT.

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