

Empowering a Mobile Workforce

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Unification Strategy

With Cathy Zatloukal, CEO of MobileAccess Networks [www.mobileaccess.com].

Question: What is the attraction of a unified wireless infrastructure?

Zatloukal: Once you talk to an IT manager about what the solutions enable them to do, [they say it's a good idea]. The reason is that it speaks to them on several different levels. The Cap X going into the infrastructure and putting wireless into a building three or four times [is great]. When you look at a single network, about 50 percent of the cost is the infrastructure. Would you rather put in five different wireless networks and have 50 percent of the cost of each being the wiring, or make a single investment? It's very easy to see how it would be compelling. It probably costs a little more to put in a broadband open system, but you are not paying for infrastructure with every application. Definitely what we are seeing is that more and more facilities and IT groups, when looking at new construction, see wireless as one of the [concerns]. Having a system such as this is a slam dunk.

Question: Are there interference problems when you have so many different networks honing in on a single antenna system?

Zatloukal: There are a couple of different dimensions to these systems. The first decision point an IT manager has to make is "do I want a broadband infrastructure?" Today you have wireless service anywhere from 600 MHz to 6 GHz. Certain product architectures will support that, and MobileAccess is one them. Others are much more narrow. The second element is wireless's inherent potential to interfere with adjacent frequencies. What a system has to have is some sort of built-in ability to basically condition each of the different types of wireless systems in such a way that they do not interfere with other systems. It's a unique set of core competencies.

Question: What is driving this sector?

Zatloukal: It is definitely because we are moving beyond voice wireless services to some of the data services, getting into new markets such as WiMax and even interesting things such as hybrid satellite and cellular networks. There are all kinds of multiple types of wireless communications in buildings. Gartner, I think it was, released a report saying as many as five different wireless services will be used by (typical) enterprises. It's more and more [compelling to have] a common infrastructure that is an open system that allows you to scale all these services into your network very gracefully with minimal disruptions.

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