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3GPP publishes first femto cell standard

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The Femto Forum, 3GPP and the Broadband Forum have announced that the world's first femto cell standard has been published by 3GPP. The three say this paves the way for standardised femto cells to be produced in large volumes, enabling interoperability between different vendors' access points and femto gateways.

The new standard, which forms part of 3GPP's Release 8 and is interdependent on Broadband Forum extensions to its Technical Report-069 (TR-069), has been completed in 12 months.

The standard covers four main areas: network architecture; radio & interference aspects (both completed last December); femto cell management/provisioning and security (finalised this month). In terms of network architecture, the crucial interface between potentially millions of femto cells and gateways in the network core has been called luh. This re-uses 3GPP UMTS protocols and extends them to support high-volume femto cell deployments.

The standard has adopted the Broadband Forum's TR-069 management protocol which has been extended to incorporate a new data model for femto cells developed collaboratively by Femto Forum and Broadband Forum members and published by the Broadband Forum as Technical Report 196 (TR-196).

TR-069 is already widely used in fixed broadband networks and in set-top boxes. It will enable mobile operators to simplify deployment and enable automated remote provisioning, diagnostics-checking and software updates, the organisations claim. The standard also uses a combination of security measures including IKEv2 (Internet Key Exchange v2) and IPsec (IP Security) protocols to authenticate the operator and subscriber and then guarantee the privacy of the data exchanged.

"All technologies require standards in order to make the transition from niche application to wide scale adoption. By employing and extending best of breed standards, such as TR-069 for management of the Femto Access Point as part of the home network, this new femto cell standard has the best possible chance of succeeding. We are pleased to have collaborated on this new converged service with 3GPP and the Femto Forum" said George Dobrowski, the Broadband Forum's Chairman.

Work is already underway to incorporate femto cell technology in the 3GPP's release 9 standard, which will address LTE femto cells as well as support more advanced functionality for 3G femto cells. Femto cell

standards are also being developed for additional air interface technologies by other industry bodies.

About the Standards

3GPP Technical Specifications, all available from www.3gpp.org [1]

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