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Broadband Forum and IP/MPLS Forum unite

Forum's will combine knowledge to advance next generation packet network specifications

by Kendrick Struthers-Watson

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At its second quarter meeting in Valencia, Spain yesterday, the Broadband Forum announced the creation of a worldwide organization through its union with the IP/MPLS Forum (IP Multi Protocol Label Switching).

These two organizations bring together the industry experts who have, until now, looked at the evolving broadband network from different ends of the network. With this important union, the core and access aggregation work of the IP/MPLS Forum will seamlessly blend and strengthen the local transport and digital home management specifications of the Broadband Forum.

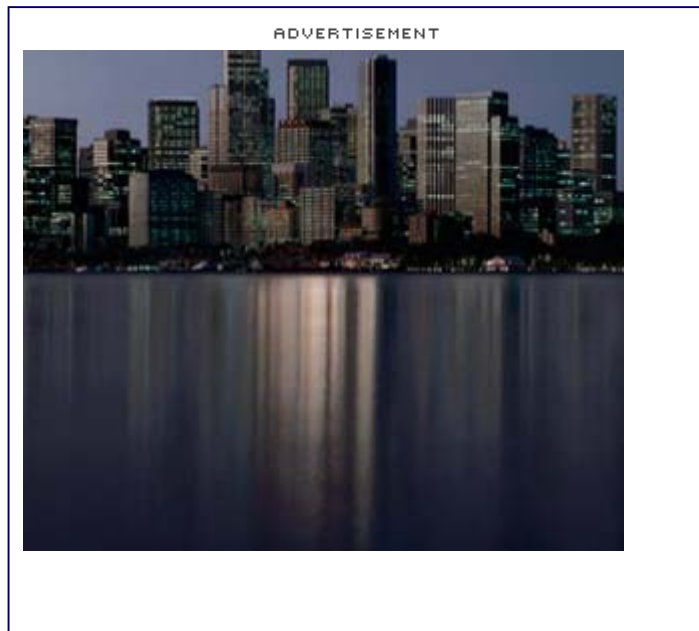
Robin Mersh, Broadband Forum COO, said that under the Broadband Forum name, the new organization, comprising an enlarged 220 strong membership of most of the world's leading service providers, equipment manufacturers, chip vendors and industry bodies, will play an increasingly influential role in defining interoperable network equipment for local broadband access, advancing mobile backhaul solutions as well as empowering the next wave of business services, IPTV, gaming and other applications as they surface.

The union came about following an industry analysis by the IP/MPLS Forum Board last year which concluded that convergence was the key to the future success of standards specifications work. It then focused on how its work aligned with other organizations and when, in June 2008, the former DSL Forum became the Broadband Forum, it appeared that many gaps towards empowering a stronger end-to-end multiservice architecture could be filled by bringing the two organizations together.

"In the past when we had ideas, we'd have to cross them across IP/MPLS members who would then get together to discuss them and all that took valuable time," Mersh said. "Being together as one organization we have short-cut the telephone tag effect and all relevant ideas can be spoken about in real-time and dealt with in a more time-effective manner."

Yesterday's announcement comes as broadband deployment continues healthy growth around the world despite the current economic challenges across all industry sectors. More than 410 million users enjoy the benefits of broadband and the union of these two organizations can only help sustain this momentum as well as opening up new opportunities.

Service providers welcomed the union.



Verizon Communications' VP of Network Architecture, Stu Elby said his company was an active contributor of both organizations and applauded the decision to unite. "As broadband convergence continues, the Broadband Forum will be a key organization to ensure providers' needs are met with a holistic end-to-end perspective, ensuring no gaps in critical network specifications."

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