



Disruptive Analysis

Don't Assume

Convergence gateways - some quick thoughts

Friday September 26, 2008

I had a meeting this morning at NetEvents with a company I hadn't really spoken to for a very long time - GenBand. They acquired NextPoint last week - itself a combination of the former ReefPoint and Nextone, and one that I frequently encounter when talking about femto and dual-mode WiFi architectures.

Basically, the company plays in the "convergence gateway" market - which as a telecoms industry sector is an ugly mix of security gateways, media gateways, SBCs, GGSNs, DPI boxes, femto & WiFi gateways and assorted other application-oriented boxes.

Essentially, the sector involves something sitting between the access part of the network (fixed/mobile) and the core applications (legacy CS switches, IMS, NGN, Internet, VoIP etc). This "something" or "somethings" perform a selection of security, control, aggregation, transformational and monitoring functions.

Many companies operate in this general space - Sonus Networks, Acme Packet, Mavenir, Cisco, Stoke and so on. Many of the larger telecom companies like Ericsson and Motorola buy modules on an OEM basis and are this also involved as aggregators.

There is the usual debate about best-of-breed vs. integrated boxes, but I tend to agree with the view that certain things will make sense to blend into unified platforms. The GenBand / NextPoint merger looks quite a smart move against this.

I'm also wondering whether this layer of the network might be the right point to open up network APIs & expose capabilities for various Telco 2.0 business models.

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