Optical Internetworking Forum Sub-Group Presents Carrier Requirements for Offering Optical Services to Customers

FREMONT, CA – October 17, 2000 - The Optical Internetworking Forum announced today that the sub-working group of Carrier companies has drafted a document containing requirements for services to be supported by the OIF’s User Network Interface (UNI) 1.0 technical specification. The document, titled Carrier Optical Services Framework and Associated Requirements for UNI, is a work in progress that is intended to provide a framework and high-level requirements to guide OIF’s work on the UNI and other interfaces to the Optical Layer (OL) Control Plane. OIF members are expected to vote on the document by year end. In addition, the document outlines the optical network capabilities necessary for a Carrier to offer optical services including provisioned bandwidth, bandwidth-on-demand and Optical Virtual Private Networks (OVPN). The OIF’s Carrier requirements document will be shared with various standards groups including the IETF, ITU-T and T1X1 as input to their standardization work on Automatic Switched Optical Networks (ASON).

“This unique Carrier group is really driving the OIF to develop a unified set of interoperability standards that would open the door to offering enhanced services to their customers," said Carol Sensale, OIF president. "When a Carrier does not have end-to-end control of the network infrastructure necessary to meet the needs of their customers, it becomes necessary to link-up with networks managed by other service providers. The intent of the OIF's Carrier sub-working group is to develop requirements that will make the transition from one provider's network to another’s appear seamless to the customer. This joint effort will be good for Carriers, vendors and customers.”

While not enabling new service, the provisioned bandwidth specifications outlined in the requirements document will enable Carriers to automate many of the services that they already offer. Modeling the traditional telco operation, the Carrier would still manage the installation and set-up for a customer request, but optical networking standards would allow for automatic configuration and make the entire process more efficient.
Bandwidth-on-demand is a planned optical service that will allow Carriers to set up an optical channel on-demand for a customer. This service will enable the Carrier's customers to take advantage of the bandwidth of an existing optical network on an "as needed" and "pay-per-use" basis. With an established set of interoperability standards, Carriers will be able to reach across the existing optical networking infrastructure of different service providers without worrying about component compatibility issues.

The Optical Virtual Private Network (OVPN) will allow Carriers to provide their customers - primarily medium to large-sized companies - with a dedicated and re-configurable optical link and guaranteed network capacity on a contract basis. Widespread Carrier acceptance of interoperability standards will allow customers to access major optical network infrastructures from a variety of service providers as a flexible and affordable alternative to the installation of a proprietary and expensive network infrastructure.

About the OIF Carrier Sub-Working Group

During an OIF quarterly meeting in May of 2000, a special interest group of carrier companies was formed with the intent of generating a unified view of Carrier requirements for the UNI 1.0 technical document. The carrier companies in the sub-working group of OIF’s Architecture Working Group include AT&T, Cable and Wireless, Deutsche Telecom, KDD, and UUNET among others.

About the OIF

Launched in April of 1998, the OIF is a rapidly growing, non-profit organization with 240+ member companies to date, including many of the world’s leading carriers and vendors. As the only industry group uniting packet and voice networks, the OIF helps advance the standards and methods of optical networks. The mission of the OIF is to foster the development and deployment of interoperable products and services for data switching and routing using optical networking technologies.

With the goal of promoting worldwide compatibility of optical internetworking products, the OIF actively supports and extends the work of national and international standards bodies. Formal liaisons have been established with The ATM Forum, IEEE 802.3 HSSG and the IETF. More information on the OIF can be found at www.oiforum.com.

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