MagniFi Automates the Hunt for Wi-Fi

BY BEN MUNSON

Las Vegas might have more Wi-Fi hotspots than slot machines. Probably not, but there are lots of them and finding a good one can be as difficult as picking out a winner among the one-armed bandits.

CTIA MagniFi can help with that. Devicescape is offering up its app on a trial basis during the conference to show off what its curator service can do.

Describing the curiously named service his company provides, Devicescape CMO David Nowicki explained MagniFi as a service for operators that provides end-users with seamless connectivity by automating the connection process to a network of vendor-contributed Wi-Fi hotspots. MagniFi runs in the background on a handset where it automatically grabs Wi-Fi whenever available, handles any authentications needed and displays a variety of statistics, like usage and signal strength.

"You don't really think about what cell tower you connect to, so why should you think about what Wi-Fi you connect to," asked Nowicki. "It should just connect you automatically."

Devicescape's Curated Virtual Network (CVN) currently calls up 11 million hotspots nationwide and 50,000 in Las Vegas alone. .

But the application isn't so high on Wi-Fi that it won't bump users back to cellular if the Wi-Fi connection dips below 50 percent and there's no better connection. Nowicki said this is because of Devicescape's ultimate goal to ensure a quality-controlled connectivity experience for consumers.

Devicescape has partnered with carriers like MetroPCS and MVNOs like Republic Wireless, a company that heavily relies on free public Wi-Fi.

This adoption of MagniFi by carriers goes toward proving a point that Nowicki made about how end-users don't typically separate cellular and Wi-Fi service in their minds. Rather, they just look

Testing CTIA Days 1, 2, 3

On Monday, Global Wireless Solutions, Inc. ("GWS") performed testing within Sands Expo and Convention Center to measure the network performance of four wireless national carriers, including AT&T, Sprint, T-Mobile, and Verizon. This test provided a baseline on the relatively unloaded wireless networks before the main conference started. GWS performed indoor testing in the convention center using Rohde & Schwarz's SwissQual Ranger platform, capable of testing 4 voice and 4 data networks simultaneously. The Ranger utilized USB sticks to test data networks. GWS also performed data testing using a GWS-developed speed test app loaded onto Samsung Galaxy S3 and S4 devices.

Testing showed that all voice calls were successful on AT&T, Sprint, and Verizon networks, while T-Mobile blocked one call near the Venetian Ballroom.

Data tests showed that Verizon's and AT&T's LTE networks provided average download throughputs between 8 and 15 Mbps, and average upload throughputs between 5 and 8 Mbps. T Mobile's DC-HSPA network provided download throughputs about half that of the LTE networks. T-Mobile did recently launch LTE in Las Vegas, but an LTE-capable Galaxy S4 was not available for testing. Sprint's EVDO results rounded out the lower tier with less than 1 Mbps download throughput. T-Mobile was the only network to experience multiple task failures.

On the Samsung Galaxy devices loaded with the GWS speed test app, download and upload throughputs were slightly faster than the Ranger testing on the AT&T and Verizon LTE networks. Several LTE sessions had download throughputs faster than 30 Mbps, with AT&T delivering the fastest at 45 Mbps. ●

Mavenir Targets OTT Players

BY ANDREW BERG

Bahram Jalalizadeh, executive vice president of business development and strategic accounts for Mavenir, says that while a lot of the noise around a show like CTIA is always focused on "the next big thing", his company sees that a big requirement is to ensure that the new works well with the existing network and allows operators to offer seamless services.

"Operators and vendors are very focused on next generation networks and LTE roll-out, but for a good many years to come the new networks will need to run alongside and integrate with the existing 3G infrastructure," Jalalizadeh says.

Mavenir hopes to showing how its technology can help operators merge and converge the new with the legacy to offer improved services and more competitive offerings throughout their network transformation process.

The company arrives at this year's show on the back of being recognized in a European Awards program for its work in building and delivering enhanced voice services and rich messaging over LTE networks in North America.

"Our work with Metro PCS has been hailed as world-leading by our European peers and at CTIA we will be showcasing that work and the next phase of inno-

vation," Jalalizadeh says.

Mavenir is presenting with MetroPCS at the RCS Summit on Wednesday, where the company hopes to highlight the fact that in addition to providing the technology, Mavenir acted as system integrator on the deployments, in a multi-vendor environment.

Jalalizadeh said that the move to all-IP networks is both an opportunity, as well as a challenge. While Over-the-Top (OTT) players like Skype, Viber and WhatsApp win traction with customers, operators need to fight back with a solution does it better.

"The tools they need to compete are here and the opportunity

exists to innovate, create mashups, launch services themselves or form revenue sharing partnerships," Jalalizadeh said, adding that the really hard part is going to be transitioning to a carrier grade RCS solution that exceeds the quality of the OTT offerings.

"Customers will expect new operator services to be as good or better than they had before," Jalalizadeh says. "That means an operator-branded Voice-over-LTE (VoLTE) call must deliver service parity and the same level of seamless coverage they got on existing 3G networks. Handling and managing that transition between technologies is a critical task for the operator community." ●