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IPTV Middleware Taking Hold in Independent Market

Virtual Remote Allows Service Provider Control of a Subscriber's Set Top Box

In just 24 months, Innovative Systems IPTV Middleware solution has gone from the drawing board to over 4000 set top boxes deployed. According to Voice and Video Services Director, Ryan Tupper, "much progress has been made with more still to come". "By taking our time and working closely with our first beta test customers, we've developed key features, such as a virtual remote, customizable report generation and blended telephony features that will be distinguishing factors when comparing Innovative Systems Middleware with other vendors." Another key factor is that all components of the middleware including support, upgrades and updates are provided by Innovative Systems.



How is the Middleware being received by customers?

Bill Eckles, CEO, BEVCOMM - Blue Earth, MN says, "We are getting a lot of good customer responses. The customers like the look and feel of the channel guide. The interface is very intuitive. It also has a very modern feel. We have rolled out IPTV in three communities. Two of the communities are in a competitive environment, it is still early, but we are getting some good traction." Eckles continues, "I consider Innovative Systems to be more of partner for us rather than a vendor and any potential customers looking for a middleware solution are welcome to do a site visit here at BEVCOMM to get a better feel for the product in a real world environment."

IPTV Middleware Milestones:

- 3800 Amino 130 Set Top Boxes in Operation
- Caller ID Screen Pop
- MPEG 2/4
- SD & HD
- Incoming Call Log
- Click to Call
- Virtual Control of a Subscriber's Set Top Box
- PVR Beta Testing - 2nd Quarter 2009 Using Amino 530 STBs

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Notify Plus - The Next Killer Application?

If you have customers that desire to notify multiple contacts with a message about a meeting, event or past due bill - this may be the solution for them.

The Notify Plus Service, now available on the APMAX, evolved from the AP service known as Wake-Up Plus. The difference is that with Notify Plus Service, the customer can set up and activate the notification service without requiring assistance from the service provider.

With the Phone Central application on their computer, subscribers create 'Phone Books' which are individual lists of phone numbers to call for notification. Subscribers schedule the date and time for their messages to go out. A subscriber may store 20 unique messages to use as their notification message.

Scenarios for reasons subscribers would want to use Notify Plus are too numerous to mention, but they could include late pays, meeting notifications, planned service outages, school closures, and more.

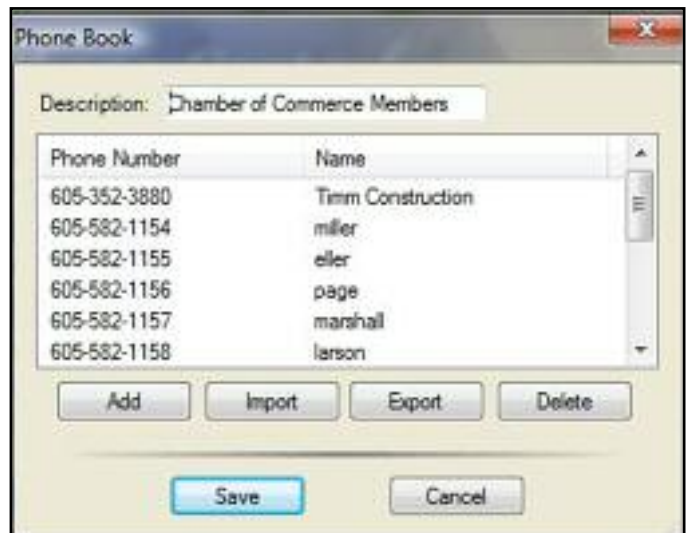
As the service provider, you have the option to create a tiered pricing structure based on the number of trunks you want to allow for a particular subscriber. The most basic user who needs only to reach 30 phone numbers at any given time could be assigned 1 trunk. The service could call those 30 phone numbers to deliver a 15 second message in approximately 10 minutes. Subscribers needing to notify large lists of phone numbers could be assigned more trunks, thus increasing the number of calls Notify Plus can make simultaneously.

Additional functionality such as email completion reports, in-progress job control and the ability to import large lists of phone numbers makes this service very flexible for the subscriber. Having Notify Plus as a service offering gives your sales staff a valid reason to contact every business customer. For your training and marketing needs, a video and printed user guide template are available for download from the Innovative Systems website.

Contact your Innovative Systems sales representative for more information.



Subscribers create Phone Books which store lists of numbers to notify.



Subscribers store Phone Numbers to notify within Phone Books as shown in the above example.



Here we see a notification job in progress. It is 67% complete using the Middle School Phone Book.

Weather Plus - Offer Stats Without the Equipment

If you have always wanted to give your subscribers a local number to call for weather statistics, but didn't want to maintain a weather station, the new Weather Plus on the APMAX should be considered as an option. Like the AP version, Weather Plus on APMAX can use weather statistics from a Davis Weather Station. It also provides the functionality of retrieving conditions for a configured NOAA weather station and stores the results in memory, thus eliminating the need to purchase weather monitoring equipment.

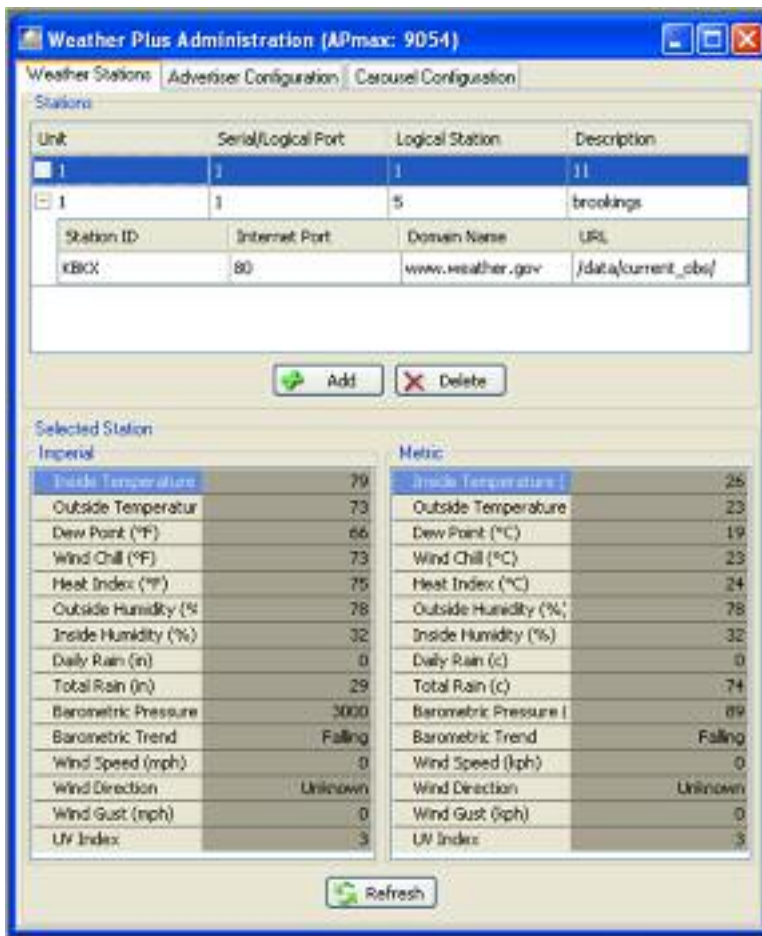
For service providers with multiple exchanges, APMAX Weather Plus also allows for multiple weather stations with either the Davis Weather Station or an XML NOAA weather feed.

To promote services or other information, up to 5 promotional messages can be recorded before and after the weather information.

A typical Weather Plus call would go like this:

1. Caller dials the weather # such as xxx-temp.
2. Service plays promotional message (if configured).
3. Service voices current weather conditions.
4. Service plays promotional message (if configured).

Weather Plus can also generate reports to show a log of the calls received. This can be helpful if a service provider chooses to sell the promotional message availability to businesses. A dial in administrative number can be used to change the recorded promotional announcements whenever necessary.



Everybody talks about the weather. Weather Plus, if promoted through the local phone company, can be a valuable public service and a means to deliver promotional messages about your services or those of other businesses.

For more information, contact your Innovative Systems sales representative.

Northeastern Region Sees New Account Manager



Innovative Systems is pleased to announce recent changes in the AP/APMAX Sales Staff. Scott Sobolewski, formerly the Account Manager for the Northeastern region of the United States has accepted the new position of National Accounts Director.

Accepting the position of Account Manager for the Northeastern region is John Muller. Muller is responsible for introducing Innovative System's two new product lines, APMAX, and IPTV Middleware to Independent Telcos.

Muller joined the Innovative Systems team a few months ago. He has completed the APMAX advanced training course as well as extensively studied our product capabilities and how they can help to enhance a Telco's service offerings. Muller has been in the telecommunications industry for over 20 years providing customers with network switching peripherals.

According to Ryan Tupper, Director of Voice and Video Service, Innovative Systems, "We interviewed several highly qualified candidates for this opportunity and were pleased that our top choice accepted the position." Regarding Muller's abilities, Tupper added, "He has worked with well known telecommunications vendors and will be a tremendous resource for our customers in the Northeastern United States."



eLation User Meeting Highlights

Attendees Urged to Sell Solutions, Not Features

What attracts over 100 people from 13 different states and 29 different companies to Mitchell, SD? The Corn Palace? Not in this case. Rather it's the desire to network and learn at the eLation User Meeting.

Innovative Systems hosted the Spring 2009 User Meeting April 7-8. This meeting was a great mixture of information, training, amateur videos, networking and practical jokes.

Roger Musick, Innovative Systems CEO, opened the meeting with an overview of what Innovative Systems has been doing to meet the needs of clients and future industry requirements. He stressed the importance of changing the mindset that communications companies are selling 'features' (Caller ID, Voice Mail, Internet service, etc.) to the mindset that companies sell 'solutions'. He encouraged attendees to think in terms of selling solutions to solve problems for customers.

For example, a realtor needs to be mobile, but they also need reliable service and the ability to provide one point of contact. Communications companies should consider solutions that offer the needed mobility while maintaining the importance of the landline phone. If you would offer a small business package that included a landline phone with Single Number Service, the realtor's landline and wireless phones could ring simultaneously allowing them to answer no matter where they are at the time. If we (landline service providers) are going to survive, we need to sell solutions that make the landline relevant to subscribers.

Keynote Speaker Dennis Couture, Blue Birches LLC, gave the group several ideas to consider as he outlined how people are becoming 'hyper-connected' as more gadgets and electronics are making their way into the everyday lives of people. For communications providers, all this advancement means that broadband access becomes increasingly important. For companies to thrive, it comes down to four key ideas: *Influence Regulation, Embrace Deregulated Opportunities, Commit to the Need for More Bandwidth, and Remain Open to Multiple Technologies.*

Support staff completed the two-day schedule with a variety of information about eLation, changes to the software in order to enhance performance and usability, as well as a bit of amateur video entertainment to help support their message. Most of our

'actors' agree that they'll stick with their more technical careers. Finally, it was great to have clients involved in some of the sessions, especially Financials. Some witnessed that our staff is willing to do 'just about anything' if you'll share a story or a process from your company. Just ask Dee Roy who had the opportunity to model a Hawaiian grass skirt and lei during Doug Klein's financials presentation. What a great sport she was.

If you have not attended a User Meeting, consider a few days in Mitchell in October. It is a great way to visit face to face with support staff and other users while combining business and fun in one meeting.



Over 100 people from 13 states attended the April 2009 eLation User Meeting.



The group listens intently as Dennis Couture, Blue Birches, LLC, makes a point regarding the Future of Telecommunications.



Doug Klein, Clear Lake Independent Telephone Company, shares his experiences and provides comic relief.

Mark Your Calendar for These Upcoming Meetings:

AP/APMAX User Meeting – August 25-26, 2009
 eLation Billing/Financials User Meeting – October 13-14, 2009
 eLation Staking & Mapping User Meeting – February 9-10, 2010

New Voice Messaging Training Videos Available

Today, people rely on videos for their instructional information for products and services. Service providers with Innovative Systems APMAX Unified Messaging and AP Voice Mail 04 can now access a set of videos that demonstrate using the telephone key pad to administer Voice Messaging service.

The short videos simulate using the phone keypad to record greetings, change passwords, forward messages to other mailboxes, and many of the other administrative features associated with the Voice Messaging. The videos utilize actual voice prompts that someone would hear when they access their service.



According to Scott Meyer, Innovative Systems Marketing Director, "Our customers are trying to distinguish themselves with exceptional customer service. We produced these videos to provide a tool to help them achieve that expected level of service." Meyer also adds, "These videos serve as a training tool for telco support staff, but are produced in such a way that the telco could put them on their website for their customers."

Access the videos from our website, www.innovsys.com. Click on AP/APMAX support and log in with your company's User ID and Password. (If you do not have that information, use the available link to request it.) You'll find the videos within the Marketing Materials links on the left of the page.

APMAX Training Courses Available

Innovative Systems offers training classes for the APMAX covering all features and functions of the APMAX. Through hands-on activities attendees actively participate in the configuration and management of the APMAX as well as switch configuration procedures. This consists of one time initial setup of the switch and the APMAX for CS1500 announcements, Calling Name, Unified Messaging, Basic & On-Demand Conferencing, Single Number Service, Notify Plus, and more.

Classes are held at the Innovative Systems office in Mitchell, SD.

Registration is available online at our website www.innovsys.com. Class size is limited, register early.

APMAX Quick Tip

The Quick Launch UI on the right side of the APMAX software is a great tool for accessing commands that Users activate on a regular basis. This pane can be configured to always appear, or to hide. All you need to do to toggle this is simply click on the stick pin on the title bar of the pane.



You may also manage this Quick Launch pane from the APMAX >> User Preferences option in the Command Center. In the General tab, select either the Display or Hide radio button (shown below, left).

Another helpful feature in the APMAX UI Preferences command, is the option to reset the Quick Launch (shown below, right). This will clear the pane and start over with the commands that appear in this pane.



If you have questions, please contact APMAX Technical Support at 605-995-6120.

May 12-13, 2009 <i>Class is Full</i>	August 11-13, 2009 <i>Seats Available</i>
June 9-10, 2009 <i>Class is Full</i>	September 8-10, 2009 <i>Seats Available</i>
July 7-8, 2009 <i>Seats Available</i>	

Gardonville Shares eLation Conversion Experience

It starts with an inkling. That voice inside telling you that there has to be a better way to do whatever it is you are doing. It may start with something small like "I'm so tired of entering the same thing in two places." Then the voice gets louder, "I can't get the information I want for this report and no one seems to be committed to helping me." Finally the voice becomes deafening and can no longer be ignored. You finally say, "We need to do something here to take control of our operation."

At some point, every company will start their search for a better OSS system. This story is about Gardonville Telephone Cooperative Association and their experience.

Gardonville, located in Brandon, MN, recently converted from their service bureau solution to eLation. They had already been using eLation Financials and were ready to make the change for Billing and CABS also. Gardonville performed their due diligence going through the steps that all companies do interviewing several vendors. Ultimately they chose eLation.

The team at Gardonville prepared internally to cover all their bases for the conversion. They wanted to be sure that everything would go smoothly, and if not, there would be backup plans in place. They prepared their customers by taking initiative to send sample invoices and letters explaining the upcoming changes. Looking back, they chuckle at their anxiety. Dave Wolf, General Manager of Gardonville Telephone Cooperative Association, calls their conversion process "a series of well-planned events with great team effort". "Our conversion team showed unparalleled commitment to the project. Everyone on the Innovative team was pulling in the same direction toward the goal and really kept our team pulling in that same direction also."

In the past, Gardonville's data processing was performed by a third party. Now with things completely in-house Wolf says, "We are 100% committed to having our processing in house. eLation software has been so easy to learn. Our proof is in taking a staff member who had little background in the CABS area and getting them up to speed in a very short time. We are spending more time than we initially thought we would in certain areas. But, I believe that is because we are doing more than simply processing data, especially in CABS. We are looking closely at what the data is showing us and really paying attention to what is happening on our network. We've already been able to recover payments that we were owed by carriers. It's been a great experience for us."

eLation, by design, is a completely integrated solution from billing to Financials, to CABS, etc. Gardonville is experiencing the benefits of that integration. "There is power in the statistical reports from eLation. We recently completed our first 'real' quarterly trending report. The

reports we have been able to build from eLation have helped us reveal some great positives about where we are headed as a company and have reinforced our decision to use eLation."

Every software vendor wants to be known for their great products. Innovative Systems wants also to be known for a superb customer experience. Customer support and software usability are two major focus areas for Innovative Systems. "We believe data should be entered only once, software should be intuitive and support should be only a phone call away," says Roger Musick, CEO, Innovative Systems.

Wolf says, "Leading up to and during our conversion, the Innovative team really made us feel as if we were their only client. Even now that we have transitioned past conversion, there is no shortage of support available. Our experience has been truly remarkable in a positive way."

AP/APMAX User Meeting

August 25-26, 2009

Mitchell, SD

Tuesday August 25, 2009

Golf Outing

Lakeview Municipal Golf Course

Social Hour & Dinner

Highland Conference Center

Wednesday August 26, 2009

User Meeting

Highland Conference Center

Meeting details and registration will be available soon.

When making reservations at either the Hampton Inn (605.995.1575) or the Comfort Inn & Suites (605.990.2400), ask for the Innovative Systems room block.

Mitchell Technical Institute a Source for Highly Qualified Telecommunications Talent

As a member of the Telecommunications community, you know that specialized skills are needed in any corner of the globe: rural, urban, undeveloped, wireless, wired, anywhere, anytime people depend on telecommunications services. The growing number of retirements and the need for highly skilled and multi-talented professionals are creating excellent job opportunities.

Where do you look when you need to find highly qualified talent?

Mitchell Technical Institute in Mitchell, SD, has a 40-year history in educating skilled technicians, historically in electronics and then, as technology advanced, in specialized Telecommunications and Computer Systems programs. Students entering a telecommunications or data networking program at Mitchell Tech, will find a myriad of experiences that will help them prepare for a stable career with a good future.

Students in the Telecommunications program at Mitchell Tech will spend one year learning the fundamentals of electronics. Classes like DC/AC Circuitry, Electronics Theory, Digital Fundamentals, IT Essentials, and Electronics Math prepare them for a rigorous, advanced curriculum. In their second year, students learn basic and advanced telephony, Voice over IP, Wireless Communications, Data Transmission, Networking, Central Office and Outside Plant, Television Technology and more. Completion of their technical courses and fifteen hours of general education classes will allow graduates of the program to earn an Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree.

A student in the Computer Systems Technology program will complete the Cisco Certified Network Administrator curriculum, as well as A+ Core Hardware, Data Communications, SQL Administration, Information Security, Wireless Networking, and more. This program also results in an AAS degree for graduates.

In both programs students get valuable hands-on experiences and one-of-a-kind industry experiences like the Tech Ride-Along program and classroom and lab demonstrations by industry professionals.

MTI graduates are in high demand. Next time you are looking for highly qualified telecommunications talent, look toward Mitchell Technical Institute.

For more information, call 1-800-684-1969 or visit www.mitchelltech.com.



CAREER EXPO

MTI Telecom students installed a Cisco Unified Communications platform demonstrating voice calls, video calls, wireless calls, and the voice mail feature at a recent career expo for high school students from southeast South Dakota.



VOIP

MTI Telecom students begin the installation of a Voice Over IP (VOIP) system. The system, one of the most current digital technologies available today, was donated to the program by Golden West Technologies.



SWITCH COMPONENTS

Students in the MTI Telecom program get lots of hands-on experiences including work with a variety of equipment in the MTI labs.