



November 2, 2006

Certeon Confronts Challenges of Open XML

By: Paula Musich

Microsoft's new open XML file format could take the wind out of the sails of application acceleration vendors thanks to the compression it adds to those files. One new startup in the fast maturing market is working to exploit that.

Certeon on Nov. 6 will release its new S-Series application acceleration blueprints for Microsoft Office 2007, SharePoint 2007 and Exchange 2003 and 2007, which company officials claim are unique in their ability to handle the new open XML files.

"The new open XML file format mitigates the effectiveness of WAN optimization vendors' appliances because they don't handle these types of file formats," said Gareth Taube, vice president of worldwide marketing at Certeon in Burlington, Mass.

The new blueprints, which work with Certeon's S-Series application acceleration appliances that optimize traffic flowing between remote branch offices and data centers, can unzip compressed files from those applications and identify objects in the files to see what's changed.

Only new information is sent across the WAN that hasn't already been stored locally on an appliance at the remote site, according to Taube.

"Our difference is that instead of doing application acceleration based on network packet streams, we do it based on knowledge of the application. We call it Application Intelligent Networking," he said.

The Certeon appliances are preloaded with individual application acceleration blueprints. In addition to the new blueprints, Certeon provides blueprints for Microsoft Office 2003, Sharepoint 2003, Oracle's eBusiness suite and for HTTP and HTTPS streams.

The 2007 versions of Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint all use the new open XML file format.

Once the blueprints identify an application object, the appliances' object differencing engine determines what's changed and only sends new information.

"We never transmit the same data twice," said Taube.

Application acceleration technologies that work by performing packet pattern matching techniques won't be able to recognize patterns in compressed files because the compression changes the files and reduces the normal matches that can be found.

"In the blueprint can identify these XML files, unzip them, difference on the objects in them and then, transmit and reformat on the other end so the user gets them in [the proper] format. We're finding we can achieve 300 to 600 percent better acceleration than anyone else in the market," Taube said.

The new blueprints for Certeon's appliances are due by the end of 2006, although the blueprints for Exchange are due early in 2007.