

Firms offer video over wireless networks

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Homeland security and television news will get a boost from a new technology designed to transmit video over existing wireless networks.

"(The company's founders) thought, how could we utilize the existing infrastructure to provide broadband video streaming" when standard cellular and WiFi networks don't always have a stable bandwidth, TransStream Chief Executive Officer Danny Arazi told UPI.

"We send the signal over multiple channels and manage the transmission in real time," Arazi said. "If the cellular network is unreliable, we can still assure the quality of service."

TransStream "brings customers a portable, inexpensive outdoor broadband access point with uplink bit rate of up to 6 megabits per second," a company statement said.

All of the television news broadcasters in Israel, where TransStream is based, "want the technology tomorrow," Arazi said, and "all of the big names, the world leaders of newsgathering, are interested as well."

The company estimates that the market for its technology among TV news broadcasters will reach \$400 million per year.

There are several reasons why the technology is such an improvement over the networks' current method of satellite or microwave transmission: it's cheaper, more portable, can broadcast without making "eye contact" with a satellite dish and can even broadcast while in

motion, the company said.

Once a satellite news van arrives on the scene, it can take up to half an hour to get the transmission going, Arazi said. "That's make-or-break for newsgathering," he added.

Government regulations are not an issue for the technology because the company plans to use existing infrastructure and to send standard protocol video, Arazi said.

Another market for which TransStream has high expectations is the homeland-security market. Governments around the world are installing video surveillance systems in public transportation vehicles but currently have no good way to relay back a high-quality image in real time.

TransStream estimates that its homeland-security market will top \$500 million annually.

Richmond Hill, Ontario-based Visual Defense is working on similar technology with a homeland-security focus. The company on Thursday announced a \$10.5 million deal with Stockholm, Sweden's Public Transport Company to equip Stockholm city buses with mobile video surveillance systems.

"We went to the major trade shows in Las Vegas and Europe, and no one else showed signs of ... ability (like TransStream's)," Arazi said, adding that his company's upload speed was much faster than the competitors'.

"There are so many applications" for mobile video in the homeland security arena, Arazi said, mentioning the worldwide move to equip buses with cameras. "To be able to transmit quality video, enough to be able to identify someone's face," high upload speed is vital, he added.

Giants in the field, such as Cisco Systems, have shown interest in the technology, he said.

The company is currently working on its proof of concept trials, and expects to unveil a product for the market in nine months, Arazi said. He added that the company has only recently started talking with potential customers.

With the equipment for news cameramen, he continued, the company is dealing more with engineering than research and development issues. "There's a lot of dialogue," he said. The company has to make sure the unit doesn't weigh too much for a cameraman to hold, that the radiation and magnetic fields meet acceptable standards, and that the unit is rugged enough to use outside.

Cellular is overtaking fixed line telecommunication, to the point that by 2008, wireless will be the major source of telecom revenue in the world, according to research from technology analysis firm Gartner. Increased revenue means increased coverage; wireless analysts like to tell anecdotes about African villages with mobile networks but not fixed telephone lines.

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