Cisco to Ship 3G Support for Integrated Services Router

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Cisco Systems in the summer of 2007 will begin shipping new third-generation wireless cards that add an additional connectivity option to its Integrated Services Router. The new cards, which can be purchased in either CDMA or GSM versions, are designed to work either as a backup to an existing land-line WAN or as the primary network connection in areas where land-line connections might not be available.

According to the company, the Integrated Services Router is designed to fail over to the 3G card in the event that the primary connection becomes unavailable. However, a company spokesperson said it's also designed to be used by remote businesses and emergency workers or in areas where traditional high-speed wired connections aren't available.

Each of the cards is designed to work with the fastest version of its respective protocol choices, and to fall back to other choices when necessary.

For example, the GSM (Global System for Mobile Communications) card will work with HSDPA (High-Speed Downlink Packet Access) first, then fall back to EDGE (Enhanced Data for Global Evolution). Likewise, the CDMA (Code Division Multiple Access) card will first attempt to communicate with EvDO (Evolution Data Optimized) Rev.

A, then fall back to Rev. 0.

The new cards will work with Cisco's management software and fit seamlessly into a Cisco networking environment.

Cisco's spokesperson said these cards are not voice-enabled, but he said they will support all of the features needed for voice, including QOS (quality of service), and he added that nothing in the design of the cards prevents the use of voice, for example as a part of a company VOIP (voice over IP) solution. In addition, the cards will not communicate directly with wireless devices, but rather are intended to communicate as clients with the 3G wireless network.

The new cards will work in conjunction with Cisco's WLAN (wireless LAN) controllers. Currently AT&T/Cingular, Sprint Nextel and Verizon Wireless have announced support for the cards in the United States. The cards will cost $4,750 in quantities of eight, or $6,500 in quantities of 12.

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