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MEF drives up quality standards in carrier Ethernet

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The Metro **Ethernet** Forum (MEF) has expanded its certification program to include quality of service parameters in network kit, to ensure service providers can give their customers the service they demand.

The MEF 14 standard describes how **network hardware** suppliers can help meet the quality of service goals for carriers establishing...

... service-level agreements with customers.

The quality of service document is based on traffic management parameters described in the previous MEF 10 document.

MEF 14 covers service performance and bandwidth profile rate enforcement, including individual Ethernet circuit analysis.

The MEF is an industry body supported by switch suppliers, telcos and services companies, which promotes the integration of Ethernet switches and routers into carrier and enterprise networks.

Ethernet is an alternative to more expensive and less flexible ATM, Frame Relay and SDH-based network hardware commonly found in carrier and enterprise wide area networks.

Analyst Infonetics Research says worldwide metro Ethernet equipment revenue was worth \$3.8bn (£2.23bn) in 2004, and estimates that this figure will double to \$7.6bn by 2008.

Enterprise users are already familiar with Ethernet in their local area networks, and the MEF initiative is set to make it easier for firms to integrate their Lans with the wider networks of their service providers.

This enables easier delivery of services such as video conferencing, video streaming and more demanding data applications such as data back-up and shared network storage.

Companies already selling hardware that meet initial MEF standards include Alcatel, Cisco, Extreme Networks, Fujitsu, Lucent, Nortel, Riverstone, Siemens and Tellabs.

Companies that meet the MEF 14 standard will be named this June.

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