



TM Forum stirs interest in cloud, smart grid and defence, and delivers on 'bread and butter'

Management World in Nice attracted a record 3,000 visitors this year. But what challenges were they seeking answers for at EMEA's leading OSS and BSS event? Jeremy Cowan reports on everyday problems, new solutions and a bit of blue sky thinking.

Martin Creaner is President of the **TM Forum**, organisers of Management World 2010, so who better to ask first for a view of what went on in Nice this year?

"Among the key issues have been the level of adoption of TMF standards like eTOM (electronic Telecom Operations Map, or its Business Process Framework) and SID (its Information Framework), which has just exploded over the last 12 months," he said. "Vendors are now using them partially or wholly; we've introduced conformance testing and been inundated with requests. Now there's no more discussion of whether these tests are needed."

The TMF is also expanding its activities into the cloud, cable, and defence. "We had a session in the conference on strategies for buying, enabling and selling in the cloud," added Martin Creaner, "and it was standing room only. We had to turn people away because of fire regulations."

Other popular areas that he pointed to included policy management, revenue management, and the SmartGrid. "In revenue management there used to be just **Amdocs** and a few others with a foot in several camps. But I think about 20-25% of



visitors this year were here because of it. Our strategy in the Forum is not just OSS but BSS-based, too."

With SmartGrid "popping up everywhere" as he put it, and without a smart business philosophy on top of smart metering, the Forum's President believes that vendors will be able to sell provisioning and monitoring systems into whole new industries.

Subscribers demand more
Talking to operators and vendors at the event, it's clear that the industry is shifting up a gear from what Bill Diotte, CEO of **BroadHop** described as



Bill Diotte: It's now about what you can do, not what you can't





“Policy 1.0”. In 2003 everyone still referred to policy management as ‘Service Control’. “It was a way of telling customers what they could and couldn’t do. It was bandwidth control, just for ‘bill shock’ management.

“But service providers are under pressure from subscribers demanding more, third party providers pushing apps into the pipe, and regulators pressuring them to provide better services,” says Diotte. “Policy 2.0 needs to have an interactive relationship with subscribers. Instead of users getting frustrated with the limitations of service, service providers can give up- or downgrade options, allowing users to choose how to use the network.”

There's an app for that

BroadHop has developed a new front end for this; its Smartphone Application Framework allows iPhone and Android mobile subscribers to select their quality of service level in real time. It can give you an alert if you move into a congested zone, or if a particular app is not available. It can also enable a voluntary downgrade to accrue ‘Network Points’ to redeem later when you really do need high quality network access.

Another application called Policy Builder, part of BroadHop’s Quantum Network Suite allows network service providers to speed up application and service development. The benefits include being able to create and deploy new policies via an intuitive GUI (without proprietary scripting or coding), de-coupling app development from the network infrastructure, and a scalable virtual architecture to work with applications widely distributed across large numbers of servers.

“Operators like **Reliance, Maxis, and Saudi Telecom Company** needed us to change the architecture,” said Diotte. “It’s now a question of what you *can* do, not what you can’t.”