



## New method of delivering audio/video wireless devices making some noise

An upstart video-to-the-handset company says it has come up with a better way to deliver high-quality video and audio to thousands of simultaneous wireless device users. The two principals at Ontario-based LogoVision Wireless Inc. tell *Report on Wireless* that the current method of bit streaming video and audio won't offer it in high quality. The company has developed a one-two punch – a Java applet for the device, and server software to produce the transmission – based on video objects technology that it says can deliver MPEG 4 video or advanced audio codec (AAC) audio to wireless devices.

Bit streaming, according to a company fact sheet, “requires a significant amount of error correction and duplication of content” – something that doesn't come into play with its video objects technology. This allows for a couple of things, says Mark Krebs.

“It provides us with an ability to guarantee picture quality because we download very small portions of the (video data), and all of the information must be intact before it's played back,” he says, adding that it's similar to buffering. “The other thing is we can use existing Internet infrastructure, standard web servers, standard HTTP servers, to provide true video-on-demand or audio-on-demand to wireless clients.”

The use of existing Internet infrastructure, the company believes, gives it a leg up on the competition. “The last leg is mobile transmission for straight data communications is handled by proxy servers or gateway servers. In cellular networks these are very large servers with enormous capacities and what we can do in a sort of de facto sense is take advantage of caching on these servers in a way that you can't with streaming, unless your streaming software is controlling everything and in fact you can't do in the same

way. So we can support thousands and thousands of simultaneous clients by using the existing infrastructure,” Krebs explains.

“The transmission model enables very large-scale distribution without the need for dedicated or distributed content servers running (LogoVision's) server software. Distributed servers need only be known to the (LogoVision) server that provides the content, otherwise they behave as common ISP servers supporting large numbers of mobile clients in different geographies through localized cellular network proxy servers,” reads LogoVision's fact sheet.

LogoVision's offering can also enable handsets that don't have media players installed on them to receive audio and video content. This, Krebs says, is because of the company's decision to use a Java applet.

The company's vision and technology has already grabbed attention from some significant players in the United States and elsewhere around the world, LogoVision's other principal, Brian Hartman, says. He expects the company to make a significant announcement within about the next four to six weeks.

“This is a recognized company, one of the largest companies in the world in terms of their field,” Hartman tells *RoW* about its new soon-to-be-named partner.

In a May 9 news release announcing the technology, the company notes that one of the world's largest cell phone manufacturers is testing the LogoVision product with the intention of preloading it onto all its mid-tier handsets. Additionally, a large media company is considering licensing the technology for a pilot project. One area that could have considerable upside is the radio market and LogoVision is in discussions with two radio stations about a potential pilot project.

Krebs discounts the *MobiTV* streaming

technology as inferior and not even a true video service. Noting that LogoVision transmits MPEG 4 video that will look clearer than streaming services, he says, “*MobiTV* doesn't actually play video. What it does is it plays sequences of JPEG images.”

New digital video broadcast – handheld (DVB-H) technology has also started to gain some traction in the wireless community, but Krebs says the problem with this technology will be making it work with cellular networks. “Only Qualcomm with the research that it's done, the protocols that it has developed, has actually come up with a system that will provide broadcast on cellular networks. But it has to be a special cellular network,” he explains, adding that Qualcomm has invested about US\$1 billion into the project.

The video-to-the-handset battle began in earnest in Canada last month when Rogers Wireless Inc. launched its *Rogers Mobile TV* (RoW, April 19/05). Bell Mobility released a statement on the same day noting that it would offer mobile TV beginning this month. At press time, a Bell launch announcement had yet to be made.

Both Canadian carriers are working with Idetic Inc., the developer of *MobiTV*. Sprint and Cingular in the U.S. are working with the same company, and delivering the content to a few hundred thousand users.

Research into mobile TV services demonstrates mixed consumer appetite for this type of content application. ABI Research recently noted in a research brief that mobile TV services would surprise many observers with significant demand. In-Stat found, in contrast, that less than 11% of Americans were very or extremely interested in “broadcast TV functionality” on the handset.

The high-tech research firm concludes that cell phone manufacturers, carriers and content providers are going to face “serious challenges” in convincing end-users of the benefits of music- or video-centric handsets.