

Integrating Wireless

ENTERPRISES ARE ATTAINING SEAMLESS MOBILITY WITH LEGACY SYSTEMS.



The exact size and growth rate of the wireless systems integration market today is unknown for a good reason: Mobility solutions are increasingly embedded in new enterprise applications. The growth rate is about 5 percent—the same as IT spending and expenditures some part of the network integration market, which in 2005 was estimated at \$16.6 billion by Wintergreen Research.

The market vendors are easier to identify: Accenture, Cap Gemini, CSC, Deloitte, EDS and HP Consulting, plus a number of smaller integrators specialized by market and/or by application. Market leader IBM Global Services generated \$4 billion in wireless integration revenues in 2005, ranging from its National Wireless Practice (serving firms with 20,000-plus employees) to a small and medium-size business market (SMB), which includes “sandboxes” where customers may try out devices, interfaces and software before selection.

What are the top integration issues for enterprise mobility solutions? “Personnel identification and authentication,” says Jean-Paul Boucher, director of wireless for SRA International, a systems integrator working with enterprises that are contractors to the federal government. “We are using biometrics to wirelessly authorize site visits and document access across multi-firm project teams spanning tiny technology ventures to giant defense contractors.” He adds that the challenge of integrating multiple carriers and wireless devices runs a close second to data protection.

Dov Koplovsky, VP of offerings for Newcom Wireless Services, a specialist in GPS-equipped vehicle systems with a client base that’s 50 percent public safety, notes that “real time collection of field data, including live audio and video feeds, creates an avalanche of data, which customers

need help securing and handling.” Along with data security, device management and multi-carrier integration, Janet Walbridge, spokesperson for wireless at IBM Global Services, cites the over-arching issue of system security and intrusion detection. “IBM has an ethical hackers program and maintains a 24/7 security center to protect customer wireless applications, including a large number of municipalities.”

It’s not only defense contractors, police departments and cities that can afford wireless systems integration. IP-based off-deck (non-carrier) applications, hosted systems, mobility-enhanced operating platforms and native wireless devices supporting an array of middle-ware offerings have reduced the scope

(and cost) of systems integration required to blend wireless services seamlessly with legacy systems. The proliferation of wireless access points has also reduced costs. IBM’s Walbridge notes: “Wi-Fi is the great leveler for mobility solutions in the small and medium-size enterprise.” In a June 2006 report by Michael Speyer, Forrester Research indicates that 30 percent of SMBs consider setting mobile strategies and policies as a top priority, 25 percent already use mobile data services, and another 25 percent are planning to deploy them this year.

If you lack wireless expertise in-house, don’t rule out a carrier and device-agnostic integrator for your mobility project. But remember, of the 125,000 integrators in North America, few have expertise in wireless systems and services, so use a detailed RFP, choose one with multiple reference customers that has implemented mobility solutions similar to your own and write your own contract with progress payments based on performance milestones you select. //



BRENDA LEWIS
Principal
Transactions
Marketing

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