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# Ohio MSO Begins Cable Trend to Internet Bandwidth-on-Demand

Buckeye CableSystem, a small MSO based in Toledo, Ohio, has moved to the cutting edge of cable technology with plans to introduce bandwidth-on-demand capabilities over its high-speed Internet service in the months ahead.

Buckeye is still developing its service strategy for a new technology based on the cable industry's PacketCable Multimedia platform, says Paul Shryock, vice president of information technology at Buckeye. But it's already clear that dynamic quality-of-service capabilities enabled by the PacketCable policy server Buckeye has ordered from Camiant, Inc. could make a difference in the company's competitive battles with other providers.

Buckeye offers IP voice along with broadband data and digital and analog TV services to a subscriber base totaling 152,000 households and is facing strong competition from satellite and DSL, including triple-play bundles offered by AT&T in its affiliation with EchoStar. Buckeye anticipates it will be able to demonstrate the advantage of its higher speed Internet access service by offering subscribers a taste of what can be done with video and other applications at multi-megabit speeds.

"We're looking at a number of applications for the technology, but one of the first will be use of bandwidth-on-demand to preview the higher tier broadband experiences for people at the lower tier," Shryock says. The company's most popular tier operates at 1.5 mbps, 128 kilobits per second upstream. It has higher speeds tiers at 5 mbps/512 kbps and 8 mbps/768 kbps. "We can go higher than these rates if we choose," he adds.

"We as an industry have always benefited from things like free HBO previews," he says. "If we can show people what they can do with higher speed Internet access, we think we can see the same kinds of benefits."

As yet the company offers no special portal-based tie-ins with some of the advanced Web content now in play, but that could be something it does further down the road. Buckeye is also looking at moving its popular local programming, including local sports TV, into the Web space, Shryock notes.

Other possible uses of the technology include offering users limited access to higher speeds on a per-month or per-application basis. "We could give people who want to play games a high-speed symmetrical service experience, where they have 5 mbps access in both directions while they're playing," he says. "We can't offer 5 mbps upstream on a regular basis, but we can nail it up for game playing."

Such capabilities are easy to implement with PacketCable MultiMedia. "There's no need to reboot all the modems for the preview or whatever you're doing," Shryock says. The technology can also be used to help control traffic from virus-infected users and to prioritize IP voice, he adds.

Across the cable industry in general high-quality video over cable's existing broadband infrastructure is coming on strong this year, says Ed Delaney, vice president for business development at Camiant. "Full-screen video offered with TV quality experience is something subscribers can see as a significant benefit to higher speed broadband service," Delaney notes. "With the usual things you get on the Internet, you don't see much difference between a 1.5 megabit-per-second service and a service operating at 4 or 5 mbps. But with video applications you can see a huge difference."