



Media Contact
Gary Lee
Mi liberty, Inc.
+1-770-919-7366
glee@miliberty.com

***MPLS Inter-Carrier Interconnect (ICI) Technical Specification Released
by IP/MPLS Forum***

MPLS-ICI empowers service providers with ubiquitous MPLS-based service delivery

FREMONT, CA – April 14, 2008 — The IP/MPLS Forum announced today the approval of its MPLS Inter-Carrier Interconnect (MPLS-ICI) Specification, which defines how carriers' IP/MPLS networks can interconnect on a global basis for the delivery of MPLS services. This Specification was developed by the Forum, with significant input from its service provider members seeking to support MPLS services across carrier boundaries.

As enterprise customers have increasingly sought end-end service delivery of VoIP, VPNs and other Layer 2 and Layer 3 services across multiple service provider networks, the carriers only historical means to deliver this has been via bilateral agreements which are limited to basic IP interconnect or the transport of native Layer 2 services over ATM or Frame Relay NNI connections. The MPLS-ICI changes all of that by supporting a rich array of service interconnections using MPLS which can carry a variety of Layer 1, 2 and 3 services.

MPLS has evolved as the technology of choice for carriers as they migrate away from multiple packet overlay networks towards a converged packet-based infrastructure. This migration has allowed service providers to reduce network costs and deliver new, revenue-generating services which will support multi-media content with Quality of Service (QoS), strict SLAs, and high network resiliency. Until now, however, there has not been a comprehensive, standardized specification detailing how to natively connect MPLS networks together across carrier or network boundaries, and offer end-end service delivery.

“The MPLS-ICI provides a standards-based definition for carrier interconnect that allows services to be transported over MPLS from one provider edge to the other provider edge in a secure, consistent and transparent manner,” said Nabil Bitar, Editor of the MPLS-ICI specification and Director, Packet Network Architecture at Verizon Communications. “In addition, because MPLS is a multi-service transport technology, an MPLS-ICI eliminates the need to have multiple interconnect technologies at the carrier connection points, enabling carriers to simplify network, reduce OPEX and

CAPEX, and improve ROI. These are the same factors that initially motivated carriers to deploy MPLS for their converged packet backbone networks.”

The Inter-Carrier Interconnect Specification includes methods for the establishment of Label Switched Paths (LSPs); signaling and routing protocols; resiliency; traffic management and QoS; Operations, Administration and Maintenance (OAM); as well as packet forwarding and security requirements.

The MPLS-ICI Technical Specification addresses four common IP/MPLS services: inter-Carrier IP VPN services, labeled IPv4 routes, pseudowires or PWE3 (Layer 1 and Layer 2 emulated services over an IP/MPLS network) and traffic engineered trunks. Each of these has unique requirements. The Technical Specification covers issues common to all these uses as well as addresses attributes that are specific to each of the services.

A white paper outlining the specific details on the MPLS-ICI can be downloaded from <http://ipmplsforum.org/tech/IPMPLSInterProviderWhitePaper.zip>

About the IP / MPLS Forum

The IP/MPLS Forum is an international, non-profit association of service providers, equipment vendors, testing centers and enterprise users. The Forum's mission is to drive the global success of IP/MPLS-based technology, networks, and services, while focusing on application and deployment solutions. The Forum is driving network solutions based on IP/MPLS technologies in the global telecom industry through technical specifications, educational and marketing resources, and certification and interoperability programs. For Forum membership information please contact Alysia Johnson, Executive Director, at (510) 492-4057 or via e-mail at ajohnson@ipmplsforum.org. Additional information about IP/MPLS Forum is available online at <http://www.ipmplsforum.org>.

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