News

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Washington, D.C. 2005

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ATIS Releases Telecom Standards Work Plan for "Service Neutral" E-business Framework

Leading Carriers, Service Providers and Telecom Vendors Endorse ATIS Plan for Data Interchange

June 17, 2004, Washington, D.C.-- ATIS, the leader in communications and information technology standards development, today announced the release of its Data Interchange Priority Work Plan – a comprehensive "road map" for launching new industry standards that support automated inter-carrier processes for wireline and wireless Next Generation Networks and IP-based services.

Completion and implementation of the Data Interchange Work Plan will provide a "Service Neutral" E-business Framework for back office processes such as service ordering and management, as well as billing and settlement between service providers.

"Legacy data interchange standards and processes cannot adequately support implementation of new services and are impeding the migration to 'real time' business processes," said ATIS President and CEO Susan Miller. "The Data Interchange Work Plan identifies how the industry will work collectively to migrate back office systems in the direction we need to fully support carrier class Next Generation services, to include VoIP, broadband, and mobile wireless services, among others."

The Data Interchange work plan was unanimously approved and endorsed by the ATIS Board of Directors, which is comprised of leading technology officers, CEOs and senior-level executives from the industry's leading communications companies, to include AT&T, BellSouth, Verizon, SBC Communications, Qwest, BT, MCI, CenturyTel and others. BellSouth Corporation Chief Technology Officer Bill Smith serves as Chairman of the ATIS Board of Directors and chairs the ATIS Technology and Operations Council -- the ATIS Board committee which launched the Data Interchange plan.

The creation of the Service Neutral E-business Framework addresses the significant barriers to electronic exchange and identifies specific actions to be undertaken by ATIS' standardization committees. Those barriers include:

* **Cost and operational inefficiencies resulting from use of multiple network interfaces,**

protocols, and message formats for data interchange -- The work plan calls for completion of an XML-based Telecom Mark-up Language (tML) Transport Profile as the E-business Framework solution for OSS Interconnection. Under the work plan, the ATIS Ordering and Billing Forum (OBF), the ATIS T1M1 Ordering and Billing Technical Committee, and the ATIS T1M1 OAM&P Technical Committee will develop the details in the E-business frame work that determines the gateway technology used to support multiple services and lines of business.

- **A lack of globally defined data definitions and usage rules, which inhibits the ability to integrate new products and services** – The work plan calls for the creation of a Generic Telecom Data Dictionary that defines common data elements and describes their use across multiple record formats and processes. A primary focus will be VoIP requirements to determine a core list of commonly used data elements.

- **Multiple solutions inhibiting the uniform implementation of new services** – The Data Interchange work plan calls for the management and development of new interchange solutions within a "Unified Modeling Approach" that supports advancement to the next generation of OSS interconnection standards, and ultimately the retirement of existing data interchange standards such as EDI, CORBA and CMIP.

The need for improved standards and processes for inter-carrier electronic exchange led the ATIS TOPS Council last year to identify Data Interchange as one of 16 critical priorities for the industry. Other industry priorities identified by the Council include VoIP, Network Security, Wide Area Ethernet and Mobile Wireless Services and work plans addressing these issues are expected in coming weeks.

About ATIS
ATIS is a technical planning and standards development organization that is committed to rapidly developing and promoting technical and operations standards for the communications and related information technologies industry worldwide using a pragmatic, flexible and open approach. Over 1,100 participants from more than 350 communications companies are active in ATIS' 21 industry committees, and its Incubator Solutions Program. www.atis.org

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