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Interview with Greg Parker, CEO, Raketu

By JR |February 19, 2008

I have not come across a lot of companies with an ASP model that are offering VoIP as well as IPTV.

That is right. We are trying to unify three services into one, which include communications, information, and entertainment. We have designed our IPTV services to incorporate social networking from

day one. We enable real-time opinions and real-time ratings and multiple ways to communicate around the content.

You don't own the last mile. So how can you reliably offer IPTV with all the QoS issues?

Our technology accommodates for a great deal of latency. We are also very light on the bandwidth consumption for IPTV delivery. Most services out there require 500 to 600 kbps kind of bi-directional connection. We don't need that kind of bandwidth. We operate in about 280kbps kind of range.

You have over a million users. How does that subscriber base break down by the application subscription or usage?

We have near about 3 million users now. I would say that over 80% of our subscribers use the communications side which includes IM and VoIP. The IPTV side and Video-on-Demand is utilized by about 60% of the subscribers. There is obviously an overlap.

Is your IPTV essentially Internet TV?

It is live TV stream coming out of internet protocol. We don't stream to your TV set. We stream to PCs and mobile devices or anywhere you have an IP connection. From that perspective we are not strictly an IPTV provider because things like set-top boxes are not involved here. Most people would term us as web TV provider.

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What is your pricing structure like?

For IPTV we do not charge. Currently there are no pay-per-view channels. For VoD it is as per rental.

What is the revenue model for live channel content? Is it advertsing?

There is pre and post roll advertising. We do not inject advertising mid-stream. We share that ad revenue with the content provider.

Do you work with any of the IPTV equipment vendors to source any equipment?

No. For now we don't. I don't know if that changes in the future or not.

Often the first movers get tempted to productize the solutions. Are you planning to do so at all in the future?

It is certainly something we have been looking at. There is also potential to offer this as whitelabel wholesale offering in a hosted IPTV setup environment. Some of the content owners have approached us to discuss such licensing.

Can we call you a triple play ASP since you offer the three services in a hosted environment without owning last mile?

Sure. Go ahead. Coin the term. Some of the analysts call us Skype-meets-Joost-meets-MySpace-meets-YouTube.

How do you see the prospects of mobile VoIP going forward? In fixed VoIP we typically require an ATA. In mobile VoIP a smarphone alone will do. In that sense mobile VoIP should in theory have a much greater impact. What is your perspective on this?

I agree. Certainly what we deliver has always been geared towards the mobile user. Our VoIP feature requires just 30 kilobit channel. So that is great for dial-up users as well. But this is also good over data services on mobile devices. Narrowband mobile Internet connection is usually in the 80 to 100 kilobit range. But in practice you only get around 40 kilobit connection. We are also by the way able to enable phone to phone calls without the need for IP connection.

You mean stuff like mobile callback and mirror numbers?

Yes. And you can use all those services within one Raketu account.

Have you introduced any applications that are integrated

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with social networking sites like Facebook?

Not yet. But we are working on a widget that will pull users and traffic from these sites. First release of the widget will allow users to manage their contacts, manage credit, allow phone-to-phone calls, and ability to send SMS and emails.

Have you looked at Google's OpenSocial as an option?

We have looked at that as well as the phone OS they released. We have not implemented things yet.

Have you had any funding so far?

Yes. We have raised some funding. We have not announced it yet.

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Bohdana:

Very informative! I like the combo idea, all in one way to go.

Posted by Bohdana | February 20, 2008 7:01 PM

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