

Critical Path scores important IT deals in China

Critical Path, a San Francisco-based global leader in Internet communications, recently scored a double success in China's burgeoning Web-based messaging and online finance market when it struck deals with broadcast provider China Information Broadcasting Network (CIBN) and online digital certification provider, the China Financial Certification Authority.

These deals represent a major addition to the 50 million active users in the Asia Pacific who already use Nasdaq-listed Critical Path technology.

CIBN

CIBN, a pioneering broadband multimedia carrier under the Information and Network Center (INC) of the State Administration of Radio, Film and TV showed little hesitation in choosing Critical Path's Messaging Service over several competitors, both foreign and domestic.

CIBN is the latest blue chip addition to Critical Path's list of high profile international clients, which included 190 service providers, eight national postal authorities, 40 telecommunications carriers and 35 government agencies.

"We believe we were chosen because we provide outstanding value-add, in particular the low total cost of ownership, as well as immense scalability," points out Critical Path's President Pierre Van Beneden, echoing the findings of a survey conducted in 2002 by independent US research firm, Radicati.

A broadband, multifunctional email messaging system is the bedrock for any multimedia carrier - and that's what we bring to the table in the CIBN deal," he adds.

Azita Nader, Senior Vice President, Asia Pacific, explains the underlying trend of the deal. "Broadband users are looking at having more value-added services - and they are ready to pay for them. All across Asia we are seeing users eager for more sophisticated products. The days for free - but basic - services are numbered," she says.

CIBN chief executive officer, Wang Ping emphasizes acquiring the capabilities that Critical Path offers will be an important part growing the company's business.

"We are committed to growth and to expanding the scope of our services. We want to integrate video and audio mail in the CP™ Messaging Server and we estimate users will grow to one million in the first year," he says.

CIBN is one of the top contenders in China's broadband space, since its value-added broadband Internet service is based on CATV network resources. In addition, it can take advantage of the national cable TV backbone network as well as interconnection with domestic telecom giants China Telecom and China Unicom. The company has ISP/ICP licenses granted by the Ministry of Information Industry in 24 of China's 33 provinces.

The CP™ Messaging Server provides a broadband Internet-based messaging solution that can service groups of users ranging from small groups to several million. Features include video messaging. These can create a more comprehensive, colourful experience for users as well as facilitating usage and building bridges between telephone and wireless networks and the Internet.

Hong Kong-based IP/Internet network infrastructure company NetStar, a long-term partner of Critical Path in China, will provide front-line support for CIBN in installing and maintaining the new system. NetStar also played a vital role in customizing Critical Path's technology to integrate it into CIBN's existing systems.