

Cisco: Inching Us Towards True Convergence

Cisco acquires Scientific Atlanta, with the hope of combining the various home networks: video, data, voice, audio. In one stroke, Cisco has positioned itself at the pinnacle of the Network Convergence debate.

Only two companies had a complete lock over the channel serving the STB market: Motorola and Scientific Atlanta. With today's acquisition, Cisco cuts through the barrier to enter the STB market, and with it, acquires a massive opportunity to lead the innovation in home networking. Neither Motorola, nor SA had enough of the other pieces. Cisco does.

Imagine the future of the Home Network ...

One, just One box from Cisco sits as a Gateway Server for ALL the home networks, with a fat pipe coming into it. Services can be turned on and off remotely, as the consumer pays. Various Clients - all Wireless, of course - plays off this Server: The VOIP/VideoOIP phone handset / headset / Camera, the TV, the PC, the Laptop, ...

This server is both a smart Set-Top-Box and a big storage device with PVR, DVD, DVR, Digital Music Console, Wireless Router.

Cisco already has great Storage Networking technology in-house, although tailoring that down to consumer-level idiot-proofing will continue to be a challenge. The driver, of course, is that consumers would want to view, listen, communicate over multiple displays / speakers / handsets - all around the house. The specs also include catering to a secure, authenticated, multi-user environment.

In a nutshell, the STB was extremely important in the food-chain, and now that Cisco has got its hands on that vital piece, including solving the channel challenge, we can dream.

So far, a true Home Network convergence device was not possible.

Now it is.

ps. Configuring and managing Home Networks will be a big profession, and this job cannot be outsourced as easily. A largely non-tech savvy consumer population will demand that service personnel come out to their homes and fix things. Who pays? Consumer or Carrier? Without this support, Convergence will not cross the chasm.

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About the Author

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