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AirTies partners with Quantenna

By Chris Forrester

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Wireless home networking specialists AirTies says it is growing its set-top box (STB) and wireless product

ranges. Besides its existing highly successful 4420 core wireless ‘plug and play’ device for the home, it has expanded its product line to include new relationships with Quantenna Communications to take their all-new chip set capable of up to four simultaneous wireless streams over 802.11n, including HDTV (and dubbed 4 x 4 streaming).

Specifically designed for what Quantenna describe as “challenging” home deployments, AirTies’ Jim Lomax (EVP Sales & Marketing) says Quantenna has already been creating something of an industry buzz with their solutions, with many of their clients happily taking Quantenna’s core reference product. “But what we have done is to look afresh at the software and adding in the sort of AirTies features that we have become recognised for, especially in regard to coping with interference issues. This also includes our AirTouch ‘plug and play’ easy installation solutions for the home.”

AirTies is taking Quantenna’s ‘next generation’ 4 x 4 silicon product and have ported their AirTies software into the chip so that their all-important dynamic channel management functionality is now present complete with automatic buffering. Lomax says that AirTies’ range-testing, when compared to 2 x 2 and 3 x 3 streaming, shows that they again have a “best in class product”. Lomax says it will be introduced at IBC, “and sample units are now going out to just about every major European telco you could imagine” for evaluation. “There are customers who have indicated their commitments and we’d hope to talk more about them at IBC, or shortly after.”

Lomax says IBC will again be important for AirTies but he expects shipped units to be 20-30% up for 2011 on last year, such is the speed of growth.

Existing AirTies products are going out to clients such as Etisalat in the United Arab Emirates and Turk Telekom. (It has a 60% market share in Turkey helped by clients such as Dogan Telekom). AirTies products are now widely retailed across Europe by players like Darty, MediaMarkt, Multirama, Electroworld and others. Other business strands being developed rapidly is that of OTT content, where AirTies already supports Microsoft’s ‘smooth streaming’ and the Adaptive Bit-Rate industry standard. Lomax says there is considerable interest from players wishing to supply non-local programming to expatriates using OTT technology. “We are seeing one potential client of ours talking to expat Albanians, Kosovans, Italian and other nationalities, about supplying pay-TV services using our solutions, and with a very interesting business model. We have had enquiries from new players with similar thoughts, especially as a hybrid service, and we see this developing rapidly around the world and we think will be a key area for us.”

Lomax says that while wireless and gateway products are very much the focus of AirTies, and increasingly the integration of these functions into set-top box products, he also senses that the market is changing and in particular clients are looking to higher end, next-generation products, and with this in mind they will be showcasing their Intel-developed high-end media gateway product at IBC. “We are very much focussed on these high-end solutions for the home and we hope to be able to show at IBC our new Broadcom-based plug and play initial prototypes which are in full development for us which takes our product line very much into next-generation devices and another range of offerings for clients. We want to be ahead of the curve, at the cutting edge of what’s needed in the market place and helped by our commitment to fund R & D in these devices.”

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