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Slow reactions from Broadcom and Atheros in Video WiFi, invite danger

WiFi is no longer a single market, and stretches all the way from phones to the digital home - can anyone stay on top of all of it

By PETER WHITE
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WiFi has become an exceptionally broad church. Broadcom has always been the global leader in WiFi chips, Atheros, now part of Qualcomm has always been an innovator and has stayed the course. But increasingly neither one looks like it has prioritized the sending of video around the home. And that has led to upstarts like Quantenna and Celeno finding space in between the

efforts of the two majors.

It appears that as applications for WiFi get broader, there are too many jobs to do, and too many R&D projects to keep up in the air. Even the stalwarts of the sector have to put their trousers on, one leg at a time.



This week Turkish WiFi video specialist AirTies Wireless Network has decided to use a Quantenna chip, adding its name to the list of wins that Quantenna has chalked up during the short time since it first launched its 4 x 4 MIMO chips. Others include Motorola in set tops and Netgear for a retail product.

Atheros has spent time adding combo WiFi and HomePlug components, and for video both Atheros and Broadcom have made do with easier to build 3 X 3 MIMO systems to augment their 2 x 2 broad product range, along with low power mobile WiFi.

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If Quantenna can add a customer like AirTies, which is growing at 100% per annum, with a high price premium WiFi chip, then it will secure a foothold and its future. Celeno has done much the same with an unusual chip capable of using 6 antennas, and taken deals at China Telecom, Liberty Global, Taiwanese home gateway maker Zyxel, and Deutsche Telekom, to name a few. Every one of these deals is building up a head of steam, and in the rush to dominate next generation 802.11ac WiFi at even higher speeds, there will be more and more WiFi players nibbling at the established favorites - so much so that if we don't see rapid responses soon, they will both look weak, and invite many other chip players to chance their arm at taking them on, leading to a huge proliferation, not just from the US, but also from Europe and especially from India and China. Go to www.rethinkresearch.biz to see the full coverage.

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