
FROM PROTECTION *to innovation*

MICHAEL WHEELER, EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT OF NTT COMMUNICATIONS GLOBAL IP NETWORK AT NTT AMERICA, TALKS TO CAPACITY ABOUT CHANGING ATTITUDES ON CYBERSECURITY, NTT COM'S COMMITMENT TO INNOVATION AND SOME NEW TRENDS IN WHOLESALE TELECOMS.



Q: Cybersecurity is, as ever, much in the news. What should businesses be doing if they don't want negative fallout from an attack?

A: There have been some high profile examples of security problems, such as those affecting Equifax and Yahoo. Our emphasis is not on personal data sets but is more network specific, on attacks that are happening across the network and the Internet. This is the area where businesses are looking to take a more proactive approach and where they need to become more thoughtful about the strategy they have in-place.

Nobody honestly believes that you can prevent every possible attack, but the challenge is what do you do if an attack occurs, how do you address it in terms of communicating with customers, and what are you going to do to minimise the chances of further attacks in the future. Big businesses, small businesses, Internet-focussed businesses – enterprises across the board must realise that if an attack hasn't already happened to you yet, it most likely will.

Q: How is NTT Com working to protect its customers?

A: We try to provide as much capability to our customers as we possibly can. There's a standard tool set that we offer any customer on our network. Beyond that we have DDoS protection services that we sell, which we've expanded recently to provide some extra capabilities. This expanded suite of services enables customers around the world to easily customise the level of service and assistance that best fits their needs. We have some additional levels to the products which will be available once the validation process is complete.

Q: What is your recently announced partnership with PacketFabric all about?

A: We're working now with cloud networking services provider PacketFabric to extend the availability of our IP transit services throughout the US. One of PacketFabric's missions is to leverage automation as much as possible, through their SDN and with NFV. We've used programmable management of the network for almost two decades now, so we're a big believer in that approach too. They help to extend us into sites that we probably wouldn't be able to on our own. It's a good match from our point of view.

Q: Having a software-defined approach no doubt benefits your business, but what does it mean for customers?

A: We were into SDN before it was called SDN. It's super important to us. The amount of tools we give our customers to shape their traffic is dramatically different to what our competitors offer. That's one of the reasons our customers are connected to us across the world. We provide a single consistent tool set and single network operation centre, giving them the same experience no matter where they are connecting.

Q: How are customers responding to the 100G deployments you've been making?

A: We deployed 100G across the backbone of our network about four years ago, and have been expanding that ever since. Not all customers have been proactive about moving from 10G to 100G but they are now starting to feel that they need to shift. We're getting up to full speed in that area and working on our 100G platform to provide the scale they need. Migrating from 10G has a lot of benefits for those customers, from a cross connect point of view, and also for management of the network.

Q: What trends have you been noticing in wholesale over the past 12 months? What's going to be important over the next 12 months?

A: If you look at Cisco's VNI report, you can see how large scale -- mainly US-based content companies -- are now deploying content into all sorts of metro markets worldwide. There was a time when Amazon was only deploying in the US. I think we'll continue to see the new layer of technology-oriented businesses leveraging the Internet in ways they haven't done before. They are using it to deliver to, support and manage customers as they haven't done in the past. They are using public Internet infrastructure to perform their basic business functions.