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AudioCodes, Motorola Plan To Release First ATCA Products

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Two leading vendors of VoIP infrastructure, AudioCodes Ltd. and Motorola Inc., are nearing the first general-availability releases of products built for the ATCA platform.

The release of new products was discussed in a panel, "Maximizing ATCA VoIP Application Performance," at the Internet Telephony Conference & Expo in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.

ATCA (Advanced Telecommunications Computing Architecture) is a new standard for basic telecom chassis and cards. ATCA hardware can be configured to provide a range of VoIP devices, such as storage, media processors (including gateways), network processors or I/O interfaces. The new architecture, created by the PICMG organization, is a follow-on to the widely deployed compact PCI architecture, but provides larger cards for much higher performance, greater reliability and more space between cards for better control of heat.

Motorola plans to release its first ATCA products in February 2006 for general availability, though a development product has been available for more than a year. The company did not say which functions the new product will support. AudioCodes also has had a development product and is planning general availability release soon also.

Despite the advent of ATCA, Motorola is "actually seeing an increase in our compact PCI run rate now," said Nigel Forrester, product marketing manager, Motorola. "So we think it will be 2008, maybe late 2007, before we see volume in the number of ATCA cards."

"I agree that 2008 will be when ATCA starts to get legs," said Alan Percy, director of business development at AudioCodes." Complicating the picture, he added, is "the arrival of the IBM Blade Server form factor, which has thrown a monkey wrench into the momentum here, because none of those vendors that have ATCA have their own proprietary form factor."

Jeff Hudgins, vice president of engineering and product development, Alliance Systems Ltd., which builds and supports Intel servers for telecommunications, said ATCA has attracted vendors that have always built their own hardware. "We are seeing companies leapfrogging CompactPCI to ATCA from proprietary platforms," he noted.

In addition, ATCA is appealing to a different segment than the smaller vendors that tended to use CompactPCI. "We are seeing tremendous interest in ATCA from large vendors and service providers," said Forrester.