

BitTorrent Pays For Direct Delivery

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By Natali T. Del Conte

Before BitTorrent finalized their deal with Warner Brothers in May, they made sure that they would have the bandwidth to support it. On Tuesday, they announced where that bandwidth is coming from: a San Jose company called Global Netoptex Inc. (GNi).

BitTorrent's deal with Warner Brothers specifies that Warner Brothers will distribute and sell movies and TV programs through BitTorrent's file-sharing program. To do this, they needed to realize the limitations of their technology, which is why they sought out GNi for more bandwidth in April.

GNi will provide BitTorrent with a single connection that peers into six networks to ensure consistent access to fast connections using Border Gateway Protocol (BGP).

"Essentially we partnered with GNi because as BitTorrent becomes a key player in the online video distribution space, it is imperative that we have reliable IP

support," said Lily Lin, director of communications for BitTorrent. "With a secure, scalable and fast network solution in place, BitTorrent can focus on delivering the best user experience."

Derek Wise, president and chief executive officer of GNi says that this technology will supplement BitTorrent's existing P2P technology for real-time streaming.

"It's a higher performance content delivery system," Wise said. "A lot of times when someone is downloading, it's smaller or the real time is not important because it's about the end result. Because this is a real-time streaming issue, it requires higher IP support. BitTorrent were more interested in finding a high-performance solution for bandwidth and that's what we do."

Wise says that GNi had to do extensive testing to make sure that they could sustain the expected traffic. They also pre-built scalability into the IP transit address so that they could

"take the circuits much larger should BitTorrent decide to increase performance on the network."

Since net neutrality proponents would prefer that P2P networks be phased out, one might think that this deal is a step in the wrong direction, creating more dedicated IP routes rather than supporting P2P sharing. Wise says he really doesn't think that is the case.

"I think this is pretty independent of net neutrality," he says. "It's really about carriers making a decision about what content to route fast and what to route slow. If you think about net neutrality as AT&T running around seeing if they can get people pay more for priority routes, then that really doesn't have anything to do with this. This is just BitTorrent making a decision to spend a little bit of money to help their customers get a better service."

Neither company would disclose just how much the contract was worth.

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