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Wireless LAN: Everyone's talking about it! SIGOS also presents its new WLAN test system

NUREMBERG - Wireless Local Area Networking (WLAN) was the star performer during trading over Christmas, in spite of concerns about security and patchy and often poor coverage. However, WLAN suppliers rely on test systems such as the one designed by SIGOS at Nuremberg. SIGOS recently announced that they were introducing a new WLAN test system at Cannes major mobile phone trade fair in February.

Last Christmas, you could hardly have missed the fact that WLAN was the great hope of mobile phone and Internet providers. Whether for use at home or in public areas, for private use or in business, for young or old. WLAN is the talk of the town in every target group.

However, users presently have to cope with teething problems when using the new wireless broadband service. The businessman at the airport will often be left in desperation as the contract he is downloading crashes yet again due to the lack of coverage. Or maybe gaps in security allow the neighbours to surf while someone else foots the bill. The fact that different providers use different registration methods, from credit cards, to top-up cards, to mobile phone cards, also takes the edge off enjoying WLAN for many users.

These teething problems need to be eliminated for WLAN to become accepted and successful. To put it in a nutshell: the service has to work! SIGOS has dedicated years to precisely this theme. This medium-sized business has specialised in the development of highly complex test systems for cellular phone networks. Using their system, cellular phone network operators are able to test each new service before it is introduced and then test its core functions during operation. And now it's taking off in the WLAN sector: "We installed the first system for WLAN testing for one of the principal German operators a few months ago. In particular, logging on at the WLAN Hotspot with the mobile phone card has performed well in tests", according to Martin Löhlein, Head of Development at SIGOS. The international launch of this new testing system is planned for February at Cannes. According to "3 GSM World Congress at Cannes", SIGOS is going to present its new product to industry's international representatives: there is a growing sense of excitement.

Why are wireless network operators so interested in WLAN? The answer lies in the outstanding complementing of WLAN with UMTS. Unlike UMTS, WLAN's strong point is its higher bandwidth, while its weak point is its shorter range. WLAN is being invested in, in areas with high network usage, such as train stations, airports and trade centres, while UMTS is being invested in everywhere else. The type of technology used is of no concern to the user; they simply pay one bill with their mobile phone service provider. This is a positive development for SIGOS, who are equipping cellular network providers with testing systems for cellular networks and WLAN.

SIGOS Systemintegration GmbH at Nuremberg has 45 employees and made approximately 9 million Euros last year. The company has specialised in testing solutions, consultancy and system integration for the telecommunication sector. Its customers include European network providers (e.g. Vodafone, T-Mobile, O₂) and manufacturers (e.g. Ericsson, Siemens). SIGOS has been working for years with the international standardisation bodies, such as ETSI and ITU-T. The company was established in 1989.

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