

CIO.IT Track: How to Improve Data Analytics

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This year's CIO.IT track had a new twist: panels of MSO executives who judged the solutions-based presentations.

At Tuesday's session on IT integration, the judges gave the nod to a research engineer from Georgia Tech, edging out executives from SAP America and Maxxian. Yesterday, another panel evaluated presentations from Sigma Systems, Openet and Scorecard Systems.

Scorecard Systems won, garnering 82 out of a possible 100 points, in a competition that moderator and Cablevision Systems SVP, Enterprise IT, Cliff Hagan said was "fairly close."

NCTA organizers of the session, titled "Know Thy Customer," had asked contestants to discuss ways to improve operations through better use of data analytics.

Getting data correct in the first place is one way to improve. Scorecard CEO Simon Marwood said obstacles to doing so include a "trust the billing system" mentality and inconsistent "mission-critical spreadsheets."

In such cases, an operator's internal departments may disagree on basic metrics, such as connects, disconnects, upgrade and downgrade activity, customer moves and RGU counts. "Then we're off to the race of what is the number instead of doing something about it," Marwood said.

Scorecard provides MSOs and other service providers analytic tools to track disparate subscriber activity, match product migrations (upgrades/downgrades), establish common rules and perform other critical functions.

"Audits, balances, checks are absolutely key," Marwood said.

The other two presentations yesterday focused on advanced advertising and converged data collection.

Brian Cappellani, CTO of Sigma Systems, who discussed one part of the SCTE 130 set of advertising technology standards, agreed that disparate data sets were a challenge with subscriber data.

To achieve a "360-degree view" of subscribers, Cappellani recommended enhancing existing data, segmenting the audience while maximizing privacy and security, and leveraging standards.

Cappellani noted that Sigma has included its implementation of the SCTE 130 Subscriber Information Service (SIS) in all of Cablelabs' advanced advertising interops, which have tested such features as voting and polling, interactive requests for information (RFIs) and addressable linear television.

"It's actually proven that vendors can coalesce around standards," he said.

Michael Manzo, chief marketing officer for Openet, also said the stakes are high for failing to converge data in a single repository.

"Subscriber data is an operator's most valuable captive asset," Manzo said.

Manzo said Openet, whose legacy is in the wireless business, has a proven approach. "We've used technology that's existed for ten years," he said. "It's a convergent system, able to work with voice, data and video systems."

Gathering every type of data from all of an operator's subsystems can lead to reduced churn, better promotions of services, improved network efficiency, identification of revenue leakage and more control over programming costs.

"We are literally collecting every piece of data, either directly or from existing warehouses," he said.

The final CIO.IT track session is today at 2 pm. It features presentations from Acumen Solutions, Motorola and BMC Software that focus on cloud computing architectures.

-Jonathan Tombes

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