

Firm expands uses of wireless Internet

Sean Adams says connectivity isn't just a luxury in this digital day and age - it's a necessity.

The chief marketing officer for Red Ball says his company is looking to further the perks of that network by broadening the possibilities of wireless Internet around our cities, in our vehicles, on our cameras, and more.

"We do not focus on creating mobility solutions for laptops or handheld devices, other companies already do that," he said.

The Moncton-based company instead uses its exclusive Canadian rights to a telecommunications technology called iBurst (distributed internationally by Japan's Kyocera corporation) in the hopes of helping clients connect nearly any device anywhere. The company has towers in both the Hub City and Fredericton, offering an alternative to the local Fred-eZone.

When users are within eight to 12 kilometres of an iBurst tower they have access to fully secure, high-speed mobile data connectivity. Unlike cell phone networks, which are the most common method for transmitting wireless data, Adams said iBurst was designed from the ground up to process data rather than voice traffic. The intention was to give the system unique qualities and allow Red Ball to bring mobile connectivity to much more than just laptops and handhelds.

"Think Internet cafe, only on the go," he said. "You can have a live streaming video camera projecting images from a moving vehicle, or even a GPS-based video advertising informational intelligent system."

He said Red Ball has reached out to several companies and industries to maximize the potential of mobile technology. One example is the firm's collaboration with Moncton's Martell Home Builders. Red Ball installed a receiver and custom system titled Where's My Contractor? into Martell's project management vehicle, letting paying customers stream live video of the projects the manager is attending.

"It's a great way to get real-time approvals on paint colour choices and building details," he said, adding that they are working on taking the concept one step further. "Red Ball Internet will use iBurst to put a live streaming video camera at the job site of each house being built by Martell Home Builders, allowing customers to track not only the professionals building their homes but the progress of the projects themselves."

Red Ball has also installed the new Guardian Angels service in many new vehicles purchased from Moncton Honda. Also known as an Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) system, it is designed to let users securely view the exact location of an iBurst equipped vehicle in real time from any Internet browser. Users can also set speeding limits on the system, receiving an email when they are broken with a complete list of information like the location and speed of the vehicle when the violation occurred.

He said another automotive industry application is Mobile Wi-Fi Hotspots - in essence, an Internet cafe on wheels, used in Moncton and Fredericton city buses to provide free wireless Internet connectivity to passengers.

"The Mobile Wi-Fi Hotspot combines the mobile processing power of iBurst with the universal wireless connectivity of Wi-Fi routers," he said of the technology, adding that it can be installed on nearly any vehicle. "When the two pieces of equipment are combined, anyone with a Wi-Fi enabled computer or handheld device who is within 300 feet of the vehicle, whether its moving or stationary, can have fully secure and high-speed Internet."

"The originality comes from the idea that traditional Wi-Fi has a range that can only be measured in hundreds of feet," he added.

"By mobilizing the Wi-Fi network with iBurst, Red Ball Internet has expanded that range to many kilometres."

Similar technology is used to offer some of those cities' cabs secure mobile electronic debit and credit card transactions, GPS-based fleet tracking, and free in-car Voice over phone calls for patrons.

Live video feeds, similar to those used by Martell Home Builders, can also help cab companies cut down on crime in their vehicles.

In the future, he said Red Ball will work to provide these kinds of services past the city limits of Fredericton and Moncton, creating an iBurst network that blankets New Brunswick.

"We plan to continue building new, innovative and customized solutions for the private and public sectors that will help clients gain competitive advantages and create new definitions for what it means to go online."

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