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TRADING CENTER

Level 3 Collaborates With Move Networks to Provide 'True' HD Streaming

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PR Newswire

SAN JOSE, Calif., Nov. 6 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- Level 3 Communications' Content Markets Group today announced that it has formed a strategic relationship with Move Networks that will enable Level 3 to distribute Move's Media Services, and will enable integration of Move's technology into Level 3's content delivery infrastructure. Additionally, the two companies have agreed to a comprehensive collaboration on further development of technology and intellectual property with the aim of further increasing the quality and cost effectiveness of streaming video over the Internet.

"The Internet is emerging as a superior platform for distributing video and other large file content," said Brady Rafuse, president of Level 3's Content Markets Group. "The Level 3 network was conceived and built for the inflection point we're seeing in the market today -- the definitive move toward delivery of high-definition, high-quality video via the Internet. With one of the largest, most advanced networks in the world, we believe Level 3 is uniquely positioned to enable our customers to make the shift to mass distribution of their digital assets over the Internet."

"We are thrilled to be working with an industry leader like Level 3 to deliver Move Media Services," said John Edwards, chief executive officer of Move Networks. "Move Media Services build audiences and bind consumers to broadcasters and advertisers like never before. We were attracted to the Level 3 streaming platform because of its cost advantages and ability to continually scale to meet the growing demands that increased adoption of HD streaming places on networks."

Level 3's Vyx broadcast services introduced HD transport in 2004 to help usher in the HD television age. Today more than 60 percent of all television programs that Level 3 transports across its network are HD. Level 3 maintains the largest HD fiber network in the United States, with direct HD connectivity to more than 100 professional sporting and multi-purpose venues in the U.S. Level 3 is now leveraging its HD expertise to help usher in the HD video age to the Internet.

"Level 3's HD broadcast backhaul services are an important element of the NHL's delivery of live events, and we are pleased to see Level 3 has added streaming to its portfolio of content delivery services," said Grant Nodine, vice president technology for the National Hockey League. "The delivery of HD streaming services is a natural extension for Level 3 and will enable rights holders to meet demand for high quality, online distribution of live and on-demand video."

"Level 3 believes that Move's service is a significant technology enhancement -- a true step forward -- in the delivery of HD content over the Internet," said Rafuse. "We are now working to deeply integrate the technology into our streaming solutions and working closely with Move to further advance this technology."

Whereas some of its competitors mimic streaming with an HD download solution, Level 3 will be offering true streaming in HD. Level 3's caching service is already more than capable of enabling high quality downloads of large files. Streaming enables users to click and start watching immediately without the delay associated with a download. Level 3's solution will be a remedy to the well-known problems associated with streaming at high bit rates over TCP networks. A video stream carried over a long distance will nearly always get interrupted, and greater distances directly correlate to increased interruptions. Move's technology simply opens up multiple simultaneous streams, precluding the need for distributing servers to thousands of locations and eliminates user perception of interruption.

Additionally, Level 3's Move-enabled streams will dynamically adapt to changing network and end-user computer conditions. If bandwidth availability is constrained for any reason, or if computing power is limited, the Level 3 stream will reduce its bit rate automatically, without buffering.

"It is a graceful transition -- up and down -- that most users will not even notice," said Rafuse. "With the Move Media Player, customers know in advance that the viewers of their content will always be able to watch the video stream on whatever computer they happen to be using."

This technology will enable Level 3 to optimize for a more centralized and cost-effective content delivery platform. Level 3's HD streaming solution will use all of the company's deployed CDN capacity and reduce the need to dedicate numerous CDN servers for proprietary streaming software, which inevitably reduces the amount of capacity available to each streaming technology. Utilizing Move's technology, Level 3 will be able to provide a very large amount of capacity, immediately, for its customers who may have very large audiences.

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"Level 3's HD solutions have no limits on file sizes or bit rates, and we will not penalize for bursting traffic," said Rafuse. "It is our intention to bring all of the advantages of our ability to scale our network to our customers."

"We believe that the common assertion that HD is not yet ready for primetime, because it consumes a lot more bandwidth and therefore costs more to provide is patently false," said Rafuse. "While it is certainly true that significantly more bits are required for HD streaming, we have found that the higher bit rates, and subsequently higher viewing quality, encourage people to watch longer. Clearly, longer session times increase potential advertising revenue when compared to lower-quality streaming solutions. We believe that this raises the potential for our customers to actually make more money from HD than at the lower bit rates."

Level 3's comprehensive content delivery portfolio provides a full suite of services to its customers. From the acquisition of HD programming and live events on its Vyvx Broadcast Services platform, to the streaming of that content in HD to display screens around the world, Level 3 can provide solutions for every element in the HD supply chain. From camera to display, Level 3 enables its customers to distribute and monetize their digital assets. Major television networks, top advertising agencies, 8 of the top 10 most visited Web sites, top movie studios, and many of the biggest social networking sites all trust Level 3 with their business. Level 3 expects to offer its HD streaming service that is integrated with the Move Media Services in the first quarter of 2008.

About Level 3 Communications

Level 3 Communications, Inc., an international communications company, operates one of the largest Internet backbones in the world, connecting 180 markets in 18 countries. The company serves a broad range of wholesale, enterprise and content customers with a comprehensive suite of services including: Internet Protocol (IP) services, broadband transport and infrastructure services, colocation services, voice and voice over IP services, and content delivery and media distribution services. These services provide the building blocks to enable Level 3's customers to meet their growing demands for advanced communications solutions. The company's Web address is <http://www.Level3.com>.

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Forward-Looking Statement

Some of the statements made in this press release are forward looking in nature. These statements are based on management's current expectations or beliefs. These forward looking statements are not a guarantee of performance and are subject to a number of uncertainties and other factors, many of which are outside Level 3's control, which could cause actual events to differ materially from those expressed or implied by the statements. The most important factors that could prevent Level 3 from achieving its stated goals include, but are not limited to the company's ability to: successfully integrate acquisitions; increase the volume of traffic on the network; defend intellectual property and proprietary rights; develop new products and services that meet customer demands and generate acceptable margins; successfully complete commercial testing of new technology and information systems to support new products and services; attract and retain qualified management and other personnel; and meet all of the terms and conditions of debt obligations. Additional information concerning these and other important factors can be found within Level 3's filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission. Statements in this press release should be evaluated in light of these important factors. Level 3 is under no obligation to, and expressly disclaims any such obligation to, update or alter its forward-looking statements, whether as a result of new information, future events, or otherwise.

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