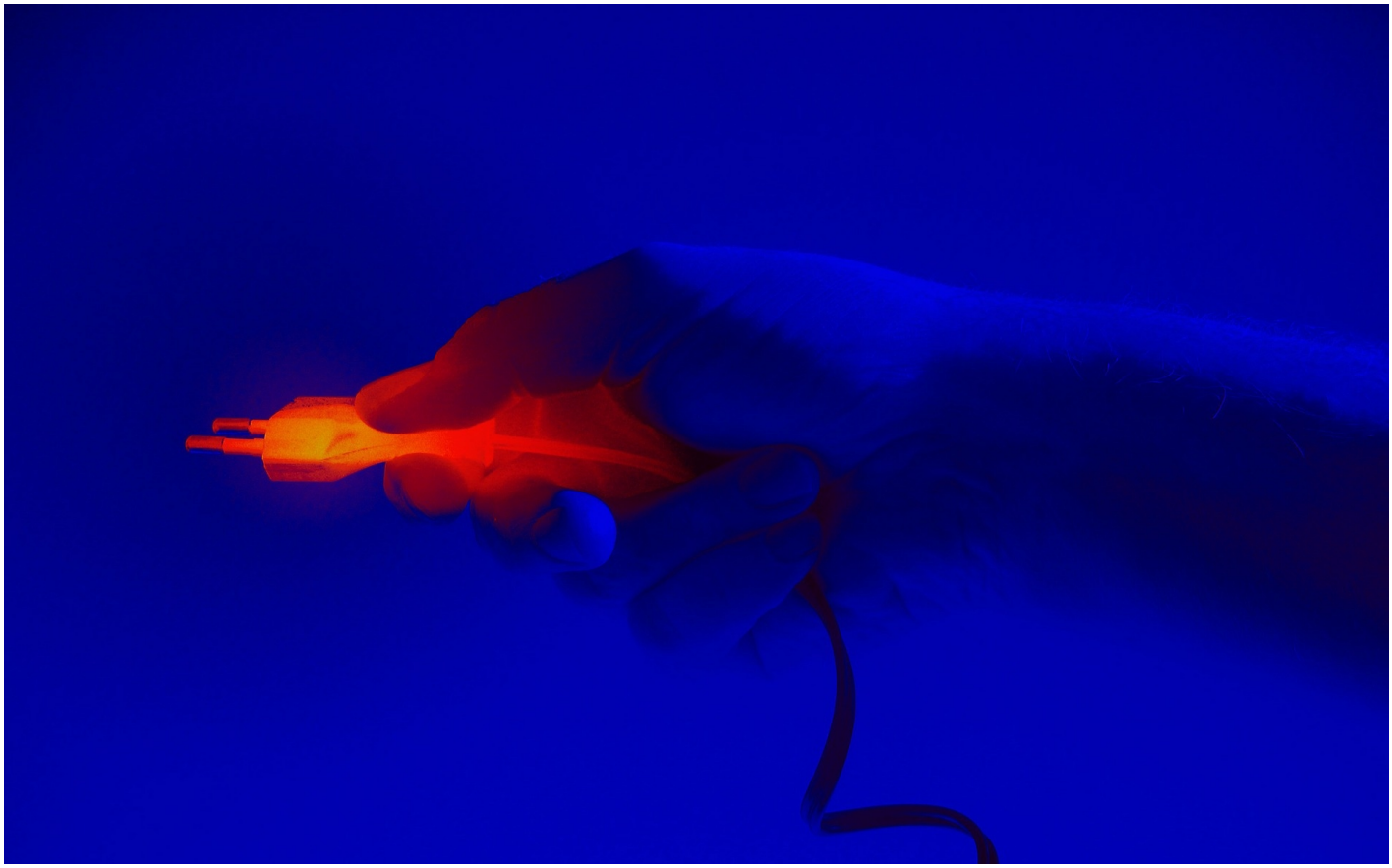
Telecom

AT&T proceeds with CORD field trial in Georgia, submits virtual OLT specs to Open Compute project

by *Sean Buckley* | Aug 1, 2016 1:30pm



AT&T (**NYSE: T**) is moving forward with its plans to virtualize functions in its last mile network by operating a field trial that uses an open vOLT application that runs as part of the ON.Lab Central Office Re-architected as Data Center (CORD) platform.

CORD incorporates SDN, NFV and cloud with commodity infrastructure and open building blocks. The CORD solution POC spans the traditional central office access, including Gigabit-capable Passive Optical Networks (GPON) and G.fast, as well as home/enterprise customer premises equipment (CPE).

Part of the effort will included a virtual OLT (vOLT), which is part of the disaggregation phase of AT&T's implementation of NFV.

John Donovan, senior executive vice president for AT&T Technology and Operations (ATO), told *FierceTelecom* in an interview that this proof of concept (POC) process will help the telco assess how it can apply virtualization in its last mile network.

“We use this as a “real world” test environment where we can validate various open HW and VNFs needed to deliver access service,” Donovan said. “We have submitted specifications for vOLT hardware configurations to the Open Compute Project. We’re also developing software architecture that optimizes and extends our ECOMP platform into access technologies.”

This last mile virtualization trial emerges as AT&T continues to expand its 1 Gbps FTTH service into more communities in its wireline community.

During its **second quarter earnings call**, AT&T said that it is on track to extend its FTTH service to over 2 million homes by the end of 2016, nearly doubling the reach of its fiber network as fulfils its FCC requirements related to its DirecTV deal.

Donovan said that what was compelling about the CORD POC was that the telco was able to migrate to a field trial of the technology quickly.

“Barriers, both internal and external were broken down and the POC became a field trial in less than 9 months,” Donovan said. “Without the support of the open source community (centered around On.Labs) and the eagerness of our operations team to be part of the Domain 2.0 movement, this could not have happened.”

CORD overall is gaining momentum as an industry-wide process.

The **Broadband Forum and On.Labs recently entered into a memorandum of understanding (MOU)**, enabling the CORD Project community to better understand the requirements of next-generation broadband services at the Forum and demonstrate how these can be met with the CORD platform.

Each organization will collaborate on how CORD will drive virtualization into the last mile network via SDN and NFV.

Broadband Forum, ON.Lab collaborate on SDN, NFV-based CORD concept

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