AT&T Furthers Network Virtualization Plans with Domain 2.0

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With its LTE roll out nearing completion, AT&T will begin "virtualizing" its network, shifting financial resources from the hardware to software going forward.

The company late Monday announced that it has launched verison 2.0 of its Supplier Domain Program, which the carrier said marks a move towards a more "modern, cloud-based architecture."

Domain 2.0 is integrated through AT&T's Wide Area Network (WAN) and utilizes Network Function Virtualization (NFV) and Software Defined Networks (SDN), as well as modern architectural and operational approaches. AT&T said it plans to simplify separating hardware and software functionality; Separating network control plane and forwarding planes; and Improving management of functionality in the software layer.

AT&T will begin selecting vendors beginning in late 2013 and through 2014. The plans will not resulut in any revision of its previously announced capital expenditure guidance for 2014-15. However, the company said that in the next five years, it expects this program to "reflect a downward bias toward capital spending."

Specifically, AT&T said the advances will drive improved time-to-revenue;Enabling new growth services and apps; Help ensure network security, performance and reliability; Facilitate new business and revenue models.

The program builds on Doman 1.0, which AT&T established in 2009. AT&T defines domains as "areas of the future network bounded by a particular technology set, such as wireless access."

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