Seeking more peers

Once the first peers have been established, and the network operator has got both transit connectivity and connectivity to an IXP and/or private peers, the next step for any newcomer is to start seeking more peers.

The policy of sitting back and “hoping they will show up” is never going to be successful. Network operators need to understand their traffic flow, what content their customers consider is most popular, and then start designing a strategy to chase those other providers so they can reduce the intermediate hops between the content and their customers.

And all this means promoting the network everywhere. Peering Coordinators have an important role at each network operator, as they both plan the strategy for optimising traffic flow between external networks and the operator's customer, as well as approach and negotiate peering agreements with other parties.

Trawling through the PeeringDB looking for operators is one strategy, especially for seeking peering at private datacentre facilities the operator is present at - it's rare that the data centre operator will provide a customer contact list for someone to use to go ask for peering. Hence the value of PeeringDB.

The other very effective way of gaining more peers is to take part in an activity known as Peering Personals. These form part of almost every network operator group (NOG) meeting today, and allows the operator to display a one page slide showing the operator's PeeringDB entry - the key items needed to promote the network's presence in various locations, the traffic volume and ratio, and the peering policy.

Back to Home page

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