

On the Radar: Aleppo

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Summary

Catalyst

The data explosion that was generated by the penetration of high-speed broadband, smart devices, and customer demand for streaming video has drastically changed the telecoms landscape. As customer expectations evolve and competing services arise, telcos will need to find new ways to generate revenue and compete with OTT players while being able to manage the new influx of data traffic. Alepo's PCRF solution combines data analytics with its policy charging and rules function (PCRF) to offer telcos a simple way to manage services, rating, and policy rules under a single platform.

Key messages

- Alepo has a deep-rooted history in providing real-time policy and charging control and service enablement within the ISP space. Alepo's PCRF was built from the ground up upon the emergence of LTE and was developed with the intent of helping telcos monetize their LTE investments without replacing legacy charging and CRM systems and increase customer loyalty.
- Alepo's latest update to its PCRF features a prebuilt policy asset library and drag-and-drop policy wizard that makes the offering user-friendly for nontechnical business users while maintaining a technical layer for IT users.
- Alepo's PCRF is an NFV-ready solution that is easily integrated with third-party applications.
- Alepo has a strong presence among tier 2 and tier 3 operators in emerging markets. Though Alepo sells to a smaller customer base, its PCRF solution is highly scalable.

Ovum view

With many PCRF solutions on the market, it has become difficult for small vendors to set themselves apart from the crowd. However, with a highly scalable, easily integrated, and user-friendly offering, Alepo has been able to position itself as a PCRF vendor within emerging markets, as reflected by its growing customer base in these regions. Ovum recommends that telcos looking for a comprehensive but easy-to-use PCRF solution put Alepo on their radar.

Recommendations for enterprises

Why put Alepo on your radar?

An increased demand on telco networks and competition from alternative services has placed an enormous amount of pressure on telcos, which must find new ways to generate new revenue streams while optimizing network traffic and managing their relationship with OTT players.

Alepo's PCRF solution integrates network and customer analytics into an easy to use platform that enables telcos to manage their data networks, partner with third-party services, and generate new revenue streams while enhancing the overall customer experience. The addition of a prebuilt policy asset library and drag-and-drop GUI to the latest update of Alepo's PCRF enables nontechnical users

to make network changes via an intuitive process, to bring new data products and offers to market quickly.

Highlights

Background

Alepo was established in 2004 as a privately held company and currently has around 250 employees. Its vendor headquarters is located in the US, and the company also holds offices in Argentina, Colombia, France, and India.

When Alepo initially launched, its objective was to help ISPs and mobile operators monetize their networks and drive customer loyalty. As LTE deployments began to emerge and bring along with it new capabilities, Alepo shifted its focus on offering advanced policy and charging control. Today, Alepo has a strong market presence among tier 2 and tier 3 telcos in Latin America, the Middle East, and Africa, and it has focused its business strategy on its PCRF offering.

Current position

Alepo has recently launched an update to its PCRF, to offer a business-oriented policy asset library with a drag-and-drop GUI, making the enhanced version more user-friendly for business users such as CMOs and network departments. A traditional technical scripting engine remains available in the previous release for IT departments that wish to continue writing their own scripts in real time.

Alepo's PCRF was built from the ground up with the goal of increasing usability without sacrificing performance. It includes an element-management system (EMS), a web-based portal application that functions as the system user interface, and a built-in report engine that uses Tableau Business Intelligence for data visualization. By adding a policy asset library with a drag-and-drop GUI, Alepo was able to add a layer of intuitive functionality, making it easier for telcos to optimize their networks and create new revenue and customer-centric use cases.

Found within the EMS, the Alepo PCRF policy wizard enables telcos to easily apply new assets to the network from the asset library – along with automated SMS customer notifications for each asset. Alepo's asset library comes installed with more than 20 policy assets and is available on a subscription basis for telcos. Policy assets are designed by Alepo based on market needs, client feedback, and the top market use cases and include items such as time, location, usage, and "happy hour" assets. New assets can be created on a custom basis, and subscribers can automatically download the latest assets as they become available.

Alepo's PCRF also has a built-in analytics component, making it possible for non-engineers (e.g. marketing and care employees) to apply assets to the network based on real-time customer insight, to deliver the right service to the intended customer set. Moreover, application-specific policy assets enable telcos to take advantage of customer and network insight such as customer-location and network-congestion data to partner with third-party players. The GUI makes it simple for telcos to select a desired application, apply a policy asset, and indicate which third-party or OTT partner will sponsor data usage for that application. The built-in reporting feature makes it simple for telcos to

extract valuable data on assets such as activity, popularity, locations with the most traffic, data consumption metrics, and collaborator details.

Overall, Alepo's PCRF is well aligned with the needs of telcos. In addition to being cloud-enabled and scalable, the solution can serve as a telco's complete data policy and charging solution with ready integration with legacy mobile charging and CRM systems, removing the need to replace or upgrade the legacy network support new data-driven use cases. Alepo states that its PCRF solution can typically be integrated within three weeks for telcos using a third-party vendor that does not already have an established partnership with Alepo. Integrations with existing vendor partners typically require only one or two days. CRM vendors that Alepo regularly integrates with include Redknee, Microsoft Dynamics, Oracle Siebel, IBM ICMS, Ericsson BSCS, Horus CRM, and Guatetira CRM.

Alepo has been able to establish itself within its niche market of tier 2 and tier 3 operators in emerging markets. Over the next 12–18 months, Alepo aims to continue growing its business in Latin America and in the Middle East and Africa. It also has plans to expand into Asia-Pacific and already supports telcos in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.

Data sheet

Key facts

Table 1: Alepo data sheet

Product name	Alepo PCRF	Product classification	Policy & Charging Rules Function (PCRF)
Version number	2.0	Release date	May 15, 2015
Industries covered	Telecoms	Geographies covered	Latin America, Middle East, Africa, Asia-Pacific
Relevant company sizes	Tier 2, tier 3	Licensing options	Subscription
URL	www.alepo.com	Routes to market	Direct
Company headquarters	Austin, TX, US	Number of employees	250

Source: Ovum

Appendix

On the Radar

On the Radar is a series of research notes about vendors bringing innovative ideas, products, or business models to their markets. Although On the Radar vendors may not be ready for prime time, they bear watching for their potential impact on markets and could be suitable for certain enterprise and public sector IT organizations.

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