

Aeroflex is one of the leading test and measurement (T&M) company which designs, develops, manufactures and markets microelectronic and T&M solutions. It's product portfolio comprise of communication systems, networks and automatic test systems.

In an interview with tele.net.in, Stephen Hire, general manager, Aeroflex India talks about key trends in the T&M market, challenges facing the segment in India and the company's future plans.

Excerpts...

What technology trends do you foresee in the global T&M space?

Currently, the long term evolution technology (LTE)-based solutions is one of the largest drivers of T&M. There are a number of different elements within LTE (and LTE-Advanced) which place considerable challenges on base station and handset designers for which suitable test equipment is needed. Multiple-input and multiple-output, data throughput, femtocells, heterogeneous networks, carrier aggregation and need to operate in multiple frequency bands alongside legacy technology are just some of the design issues which Aeroflex is helping its customers to solve.

Techniques such as modular architectures, software-defined radios and powerful DSPs are all key for delivering flexible and cost-effective test equipment. Looking Going forward, we foresee that the complexity of devices will continue to increase whilst pressures on time to market and costs will remain significant.

Aeroflex has invested to develop test platforms that evolve in step with LTE standards so that an investment made today can be reused and upgraded over an extended period to avoid unnecessary additional investment.

How does the Indian T&M market compare to its global counterpart?

LTE in India has a number of interesting aspects to it. Firstly, the first networks are using the

time division duplex variant making India one of the world's early adopters for this technology. With that comes a need for more testing. Secondly, frequency division duplex spectrum at 700 MHz is being discussed which will create different frequency band combinations that need to be tested. The third and final factor is the rapid growth of the IT services industry. Global customers are carrying out cutting edge product development in India through either third parties or their own subsidiaries. This implies that T&M companies need to consider Indian customer needs as a reflection of global trends and offer first class support and roadmaps to them.

How important is the Indian market for the company and what is your strategy in India for the next two years?

The Indian market is at a very interesting juncture and this makes it an important market for Aeroflex. On top of this, the impressive growth of the telecom Industry in India has fueled the growth for the T&M industry overall. With telecom operators expanding their networks to accommodate the growing number of mobile users, there is a rise in demand for mobile and broadband testers. With the increasing popularity of 3G and with the introduction of 4G, the prospects for T&M products and solutions look robust.

Aeroflex has a long history of doing business in India both directly and through our distributor Blue Star Limited. It offers a full range of test solutions covering the needs of wireless communications. For example, we are the world's leading supplier of specialist test mobiles for research and development and we continue to introduce new features to allow vendors and operators to optimise base station performance based on evolving needs and changes in subscriber needs.

In 2011, we expanded our Indian operations with the opening of a new subsidiary in Bengaluru to spearhead Aeroflex's expansion in India and over time we are looking forward to growing significantly.

What challenges do you face in India?

Aeroflex is known for being first to bring new technology to the market. Being the first to deploy a new technology is always a challenge as we grapple with both understanding the standards

and then correctly implementing them. Fortunately, we have some very talented engineers in both our Indian and UK development centres who have very deep understanding of the 3G and LTE standards.

What are the potential technology areas that Aeroflex is looking to invest in the country?

LTE will continue to play a very important role in Aeroflex's test and measurement business and we will continue to invest in order to both maintain our market position and to broaden the range of solutions that we offer to the mobile communications ecosystem.

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