ETSI NFV Excellence Award

Tetsuya Nakamura[†] of NTT DOCOMO Research Laboratories, who has led NFV activities, received the ETSI NFV Excellence Award at the 8th plenary session of the Network Functions Virtualization Industry Specification Group (NFV-ISG) of the European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI) held in Arizona in the United States from November 17-21, 2014.

NFV-ISG was established within ETSI in October of 2012 to study the virtualization of network functions, and has been examining technologies to achieve telecommunication carrier network virtualization. In that period, 238 companies including 37 telecommunication carriers and providers have become members (as of November 2014). There are more than 1,200 names on the organization's mailing list of people central to NFV studies. The prize was awarded two years after the establishment of NFV-ISG, when concept examinations of NFV and the initial study on architecture was completed, and was awarded to four persons including Mr. Nakamura as well as Joan Triay of DOCOMO Communications Laboratories Europe GmbH for their excellent contributions to the NFV studies.

Modern communications services are achieved through individual communications functions in specialized hardware in dedicated equipment. For this reason, when commencing new services or expanding the size of services to respond to demand increases, there are large costs associated with developing these specialized devices, procurement, construction works and installation associated with implementation, and the maintenance systems that must be set up for these systems. Moreover, in the modern world where new services are unceasingly being brought into existence, shortening the time it takes to implement services is a major issue facing telecommunication carriers. To solve these issues, NFV enables virtualization technologies widely used in IT service data centers to be used in telecommunications services, and enables telecommunications functions through software running on general purpose equipment.

NFV-ISG does not concern itself with creating standard specifications, but seeks to reach consensus within the industry about architecture for network functions virtualization, its requirements and how it can be achieved. The results of the organization's activities are shared with related standards institutions, forums and through open source activities, while the organization aims to create specifications by appealing to relevant associations if standardization is required.

Including Mr. Nakamura's involvement, NTT DOCOMO has made a range of technical proposals for NFV including architecture, interface and service requirements, has taken the lead in discussions, and has provided guidance for the dissemination of NFV concepts as an overall leader of NFV-ISG activities. As a result, many related associations such as 3GPP and IETF have begun examining applications of NFV, and have established open source projects.

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