

## Case Study: ntl: (Virgin Media)

### ntl: and Virgin Media

Virgin Media Inc. was formed in 2006 from a merger of the operations of Virgin Mobile and of the UK's primary cable television operator, ntl:Telewest.

Virgin Media currently ranks as the UK's second-largest broadband Internet and fixed-line telephone company and as the fifth-largest mobile phone group. It functions as the United Kingdom's second-largest pay TV provider and third-largest digital TV provider. Virgin Media dominates cable operations in the United Kingdom, controlling more than 90% of the market.

In 2006, it became, the first "quad-play" media company in the UK, bringing a service consisting of television, internet, mobile phone and fixed-line telephone services.



### Monitoring the regions

#### The challenge

**ntl:**, now part of Virgin Media, was the UK's leading supplier of bundled services to residential customers. These included a range of digital and analogue cable television, broadband internet and telephone services. **ntl:** operated two of the largest cable networks in the UK, accounting for approximately 3 million customers. The company's networks covered 40 regions, from Southampton to Glasgow and from Colchester to Belfast.

**ntl:**'s top priority was quality of service i.e. ensuring the consistent delivery of the required services to each of its customers, with rapid identification and correction of any faults. However **ntl:**'s existing TV surveillance facilities were failing to provide effective monitoring or fault identification facilities. For instance, it was not possible to check that the correct regional BBC1 service was being broadcast in Glasgow without actually going there. An automatic monitoring system in each of the regions was required.

IPL was already working with **ntl:** on set-top box (STB) developments, and having witnessed the problems at first hand, IPL proposed a STB-based solution.

#### The solution

**ntl:** selected IPL to develop a prototype Remote Quality of Service (RQoS) system. IPL constructed and developed a successful prototype, then developed the full-scale system, and helped to roll it out to the 23 regions of **ntl:**'s largest network.

Key features provided by the RQoS system are:

- Central access to equipment representing consumers' STBs i.e. receiving the same TV services as consumers.
- The ability to capture a recording of any TV service and view it at the central monitoring facility.
- Continuous monitoring for service information faults.
- Direct access to previously unavailable service information.

#### The highlights

An extremely close working relationship between **ntl:** and IPL ensured that RQoS delivered the facilities required to effectively monitor the network's quality of service and to diagnose faults.

The prototype and the final system were implemented by IPL to demanding timescales.

RQoS has now been in service for a number of years. **ntl:** was delighted with the system, recognising it as instrumental in delivering high quality services to its customers.

## About IPL

Founded in 1979, IPL has a long history of successfully delivering excellent value consultancy and end-to-end solutions to both the public and private sectors.

IPL's consultancy is renowned for its quality and value. Our consultants are talented and independent-minded individuals with extensive industry experience. We consistently exceed our clients' expectations through a combination of imaginative thinking, managerial and technical expertise and many years of systems engineering experience.

IPL's track record in end-to-end solutions development is exceptional. Our proven development methodology allows us to cut through technical complexity, manage risk and completely focus on delivery. We consistently deliver reliable, efficient and accurate systems to a precise schedule.

IPL is an ISO9001:2000/TickIT registered company having a permanent workforce of 240, revenues of ca. £21M p.a. and 40,000 sq ft of secure office space in central Bath.



Certificate Number FM 01589

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