

Flexible, sustainable networks in action

After almost 30 years working within the satellite communications industry, Spacenet Inc is an industry leader in the design, development and management of services for terrestrial and wireless broadband network solutions. At the beginning of 2010, Spacenet served more than 100,000 customer locations and provided network management services which covered a range of locations spread through the continental United States, Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, the US Virgin Islands, and Canada. While the company primarily focuses on enterprise customers, the team at Spacenet also works with the US government and government agencies with particular focus on homeland security and emergency response activities, and has recently started a DoD/MoD focus through its SIGS division. "We also have a small consumer business which involves the provision of broadband via satellite to individual consumers and small home offices," says company CEO, Andreas Georghiou. Clients have their diverse range of needs met through Spacenet's ability to provide a complete managed network service powered by its Prysm Pro router, which is "simply a box that can provide an interface between a satellite based VSAT and DSL lines or wireless interconnects such as 3G" says Georghiou. It's the Prysm Pro that's got the industry talking in 2010.

Historically, networks have been an either/or proposition for companies. The network can be either wireless or terrestrial, but not both. The standard model, where a client purchases a standard technology package and appliances, which come with a large range of features, and then adds any required extra features such as wifi and

USB support, is not necessarily very cost effective. Also, the management of such systems can be cumbersome and difficult as there are various kinds of boxes and usually a customer would like a specific application or set of applications to manage a specific service level agreement. The Prysm Pro is a router with a difference. The Prysm Pro's proprietary



technology allows Spacenet to develop networks that best meet the needs of their clients whether they be wireless, terrestrial or a combination of the two. Designed, developed and created by the Spacenet engineering team, the Prysm Pro router works in tandem with the satellite modem. "We don't really sell just the appliance itself", says company CTO Aditya Chatterjee, "essentially, we create big enterprise networks which consist both of the satellite modem and this appliance and we manage the entire network from one of our teleports. This is the basis of our managed network services".

The fact that the Prysm can be customised to best meet the needs of specific enterprise customers makes this product an industry first. Traditionally big enterprise networks use a single kind of technology, so they might use a DSL or they use satellite modems or they use 3G technology or they use T1. "We believe that enterprise customers need a combination of these technologies for most of their remote sites," explains Chatterjee. Spacenet's innovation is to provide this combination of technologies alongside network management services to clients in a cost effective manner.

This unique outlook, and the product that it inspired has also been recognised within the industry. In May of 2010, Spacenet received a product innovation



award for the Prysm Pro network appliance. This is a recognition of the flexible strategy that Spacenet has pursued in meeting the changing nature of managed network services as well as a validation of the company's creative approach to addressing emerging hybrid services. This recognition and award have already been followed up by a significant order that will probably constitute the largest network the company serves at this time. "The orders demonstrate credibility, and the award is just the cream on the pie", says Georghiou.

As well as the development and sale of the prysm product, Spacenet has a number of advantages in the telecommunications industry. Georghiou mentions the DVB-S2/RCS feature of the satellite product as an example. However it is the customer intimacy model that gives the company a real and sustainable advantage over its rivals. "More than anybody else we have established a reputation in the industry for our ability to handle both very large networks and very small networks," says Georghiou. Spacenet's clients range from enterprise customers and US government departments with thousands of sites, to security agencies and various levels of government that are only a few sites or a few hundred sites. "We are deploying a network now that is all terrestrial for over 7,000 sites. We provide networks for

Valero, the largest independent refiner in the US. That's several thousand sites," says Georghiou. The company has established a very good brand name and reputation for serving customers in a flexible and responsive manner regardless of network size. "We believe it takes a long time to establish such a brand name and we consider it a sustainable advantage," says Georghiou. Looking ahead, the management team at Spacenet sees many opportunities including the continued development of military applications, primarily in the area of mobile communications. The challenge in making the most of the military opportunities lies in the ability to leverage their legacy of success in the satellite industry, combined with the further development of evolving technologies like Comms On The Move. There are also plans to further develop

the Prysm Pro to make that product the kernel of Spacenet's enterprise managed network services business. Another major opportunity for the company lies in further integration of terrestrial technology and applications. It is certain that the Prysm Pro has changed the face of network services in 2010 and that Spacenet's dedication to creating flexible network solutions is only going to lead to bigger and better things in the future.

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