



Virgin Media Business

Calls on InfoVista to Help Monitor Quality of Delivered Services



Virgin Media Business—Delivering Critical Communications

Formerly known as ntl:Telewest Business, Virgin Media Business, part of the Virgin Media group, is the UK's second largest fixed line communications company with revenue of £3.9 billion (\$8 billion U.S.). The integrated Virgin Media Business network covers 186,000 km of local and metro networks and has the largest Ethernet coverage in the country with 330 Ethernet points of presence. It delivers a complete portfolio of high bandwidth voice, data, IP, and Internet solutions to UK businesses, service providers, and public sector organizations.

Customers rely on Virgin Media Business to deliver critical communications across its network 24 hours a day, seven days a week; which is exactly why Virgin Media Business puts a huge amount of investment into ensuring its network is capable of meeting the needs of its customers and exceeding their expectations.

Putting the Customer First

Prior to it becoming Virgin Media Business, the company was known as ntl:Telewest, which was the product of two merged companies, ntl and Telewest. ntl and Telewest had differing approaches to performance reporting for its business services. Telewest had been using InfoVista's software to deliver customer reports for its IPVPN, ATM & Frame Relay (FR) based services. InfoVista's proactive service assurance solutions designed specifically for service providers ensure the optimal delivery of mission-critical networked services, applications and infrastructures. ntl deployed Concord e-Health for capacity planning and network modeling. Additionally, ntl had decided to invest in a state of the art Carrier Ethernet network to address the growing bandwidth requirements its business customers were demanding. However, as Carrier Ethernet is packet-based, it is not as deterministic as ATM/FR, and without the same performance monitoring mechanisms, could be more prone to degradation around quality of services. Both service providers understood the need to provide customers with service level agreements on Ethernet services as well as real-time performance metrics including jitter, latency and packet loss in order to guarantee those customers the same quality of service they were accustomed to experiencing. The newly formed joint company recognized the importance of taking a much more proactive approach to performance management.

A Plan for Customer-Centric Performance Management

The company now known as Virgin Media Business began the search for investment into a customer facing performance management solution. Issuing detailed requirements for a performance management reporting platform to support IPVPN and Ethernet services, the company invited presentations from vendors for a "next generation" performance reporting system.

Customer Benefits

Quality Assurance/ Customer Retention:

Visibility into its entire network infrastructure enables Virgin Media Business to quickly pinpoint and resolve problems before they impact customers

Faster Time to Market/ Competitive Advantage:

The flexibility and openness of InfoVista's service assurance solution allows Virgin Media Business to more efficiently roll out new Carrier Ethernet and IP-based services

Extended Reporting:

A flexible portal allows Virgin Media Business teams to track customer-specific performance, and can empower Virgin Media Business customers to monitor performance against service-level metrics

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Martin Singer, Network OSS Architect

“We had a lot of requirements for tailoring the product, which some of the solutions evaluated could not meet. In the end we were particularly impressed by how easily InfoVista could manipulate and present the data on its front end portal and its clear, easy- to-use reporting structure,” says Martin Singer, network OSS architect for Virgin Media. “It wasn’t just the flexibility of the product that impressed us, it was also the quality of the InfoVista team. The presentation they delivered clearly demonstrated their commitment and dedication to work closely with us, and convinced us that they would be the best company for the job.”

Virgin Media Business made a strategic decision to roll out InfoVista’s Vistalnsight for Networks® solution across both its Carrier Ethernet and IPVPN networks. Vistalnsight for Networks’ out of the box functionality supports rapid, cost-effective delivery of next-generation network services and enhanced customer reporting.

Vistalnsight enabled Virgin Media Business to benefit from cost-efficiencies by integrating a number of third party management tools on the network such as Alcatel-Lucent 5620 SAM and Brix Networks BrixWorx. VistaFoundation®, the underlying architecture platform for the solution, collects topology information from Virgin Media Business’ provisioning systems as well as performance data, which it then analyzes, stores, and consolidates. This data is then presented in real-time in the form of graphs, charts, and tables through InfoVista’s web-based portal architecture. Customers can use the portal to drill down on individually tailored metrics on service and access utilization, packet loss, jitter, and latency break down.

“InfoVista’s integration module enables us to collate all the topology, customer, and service inventory from the network, and overlay the accounting data on top of it, thus removing a majority of the manual work required every time we want to add a new service to the network,” explains Singer.

Virgin Media Business also has a number of Brix verifiers on its network which are used to derive packet loss, latency, and jitter across all the links on the network. Virgin Media Business is currently working with the InfoVista Professional Services team to integrate the BrixWorx data into its reports so it can be presented to customers alongside service utilization data. This will show customers how individual links on the network are performing

and will help Virgin Media Business demonstrate the effectiveness of its high capacity backbone.

Everyone Benefits

It is not just Virgin Media Business’ customers that benefit from InfoVista’s service-centric performance data, but also its business managers who are now equipped with the data required to demonstrate to customers the need to purchase more bandwidth.

“Previously, it was extremely difficult to pinpoint packets dropped on the network and identify the cause of the problem—therefore poor service would be blamed on a poor performing network,” says Chris Ducker, product manager, Ethernet services for Virgin Media Business. “Now we can easily identify issues and it provides our sales team an opportunity to up-sell further services and bandwidth.”

Further integration is planned at a later stage as Virgin Media Business selects new equipment to extend its Ethernet network with Ethernet Access equipment and implement future OSS solutions. This integration will enable Virgin Media Business to leverage existing and future technology investments to report from customer site to customer site and provide end-to-end service reporting.

The company reports that an additional advantage of working with InfoVista is its active membership with Metro Ethernet Forum (MEF). Virgin Media Business has always been at the forefront of MEF accreditation which independently verifies the high performance capabilities of next-generation networks. As members of MEF, both companies will play an active role in shaping Carrier Ethernet standards, helping to drive equipment and service certification.

InfoVista has added greater efficiency to the way Virgin Media Business works, enabling it to take a far more proactive and customer-focused approach to the running and management of its network. “By providing enhanced visibility into service delivery and network performance, InfoVista’s solutions enabled us to dramatically improve the service we offer our customers, helping us to retain existing customers and win new business,” says Singer. “Most importantly, it will help us to build on our position as a leading service provider in the UK.”