

# JOINED UP PORTAL

Genius Networks recently engaged with Union Street Technologies, to develop the capabilities of Genius's, CRISP provisioning platform and reseller portal. Genius's James Roberts and Union Street's Tony Cook explain the circumstances behind the collaboration and how they believe the new reseller portal will benefit Genius's channel partners.

**W**ith the proliferation in recent years of next generation network services and a corresponding rise in demand from consumers, channel resellers are increasingly finding that slick access to the online services of their vendor partners is a decisive factor for winning business. Recognising this requirement, many leading vendors have developed partner portals with the aim of providing reseller partners with an integrated solution for quoting, ordering, and service provisioning.

Genius Networks, the next-gen network integrator, says it has been a pioneer in this area, growing exponentially over the past two years thanks to the capabilities of their provisioning platform, CRISP (Core Routing Infrastructure and Services Provisioning).

"Integration is at the strategic centre of the customer support delivered by Genius," states James Roberts, Managing Director of Genius Networks. "CRISP is our network platform built by our developers to provide direct connection between our carrier partners, our network solutions and, importantly, our service portal. The platform integrates the three functions and delivers solutions in a fraction of the time and a fraction of the complexity compared to the carriers and other so-called network aggregators."

In 2014, Genius was faced with a dilemma following the acquisition of the company that developed their service portal. Roberts continues, "At the end of last year our portal developer was acquired and support was withdrawn by the new parent company with just two months' notice."

With over 400 communications providers using its aBILLity billing software, including Genius Networks, Union Street Technologies is one of the telecoms industry's foremost suppliers of channel focused software solutions,

possessing an implicit understanding of the reseller model. Roberts contacted Tony Cook, Managing Director of Union Street to find out if they could assist with the redevelopment of the Genius service portal.

"Tony Cook and I go back a long way, some 10 years or so, to when Union Street was actually based in Union Street. We have a great working relationship and we've always used aBILLity to support our managed telecoms services. My call to Tony was one of those 'necessity-is-the-mother-of-invention' moments, and we quickly worked out that by bringing together the functionality of both aBILLity and our portal requirements there was a really interesting solution in the making."

Following this discussion, Union Street held consultations with Genius to assess their requirements, then set to work building a new service portal from the ground up. Tony Cook explains, "To give their partners a competitive edge, Genius needed the portal to maximise speed and efficiency for building quotes and provisioning services. The portal had to feature extensive options for configuring Ethernet services and supplementary services such as SIP and ISDN, so that partners could provide all necessary information online, without needing to contact Genius with additional requirements. It also had to be flexible so that Genius could add new products and services as required."

Union Street spotted an opportunity for additional productivity benefits by integrating the service portal with their aBILLity billing platform. Cook continues, "Integrating the portal with aBILLity meant that we could achieve even greater levels of efficiency in the quoting and provisioning processes. Data capture fields in the service portal correspond directly to pricing and customer data that's held in aBILLity. Because all prices come from aBILLity,

Genius partners can quote and compare prices in the portal with pinpoint accuracy and itemised pricing for every feature in every service."

A powerful business process engine provides Genius with added control over the order process as well as the tools to swiftly deploy new services. "This engine allows Genius to customise and fully manage the process for how orders progress to fulfilment through the various departments within the business", states Cook. "It also provides the facility to add new services in the service

portal, giving Genius the flexibility to diversify their product portfolio and deploy new services without limits. This will enable Genius's partners to diversify their portfolios in turn and differentiate themselves by creating truly bespoke solutions for consumers."

Roberts concludes, "Today's reseller needs to be agile. Responsiveness is the key competitive advantage when a customer or prospect needs information fast. You have to be first with the cost estimate, first with the fault remediation, first with the solution. When provisioning, billing, fault reporting and quoting all work together, across both voice and data networks, answers come quicker. Integration of portal services is what drives productivity, efficiency and, ultimately, being first past the post. Combining the two platforms offers resellers an integrated set of quoting, billing and management features all from a single pane of glass – in itself a welcome simplification in these days when there is a portal for everything."



**Tony Cook**



**James Roberts**

## ED SAYS...

Comms Business Magazine aims to give this portal a 'test drive' in the near future to see how it measures up against the likes of ICUK and Virtual1 - two of the best portals in use in the channel.

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