

Customer developments : BeNeLux operator Scarlet signs with i-conX

MICHELLE DERVAN
Customer Relationship Manager :: i-conX solutions

scarlet BeNeLux operator Scarlet is the latest customer to sign up to the i-conX Outsourced (a-s-p) service.

The deal gives Scarlet an end-to-end billing solution allowing the accurate rating, charging and reconciliation of all interconnect traffic.

Under the terms of the contract, the i-conX interconnect billing system will be accessed remotely by Scarlet from its billing HQ in Belgium, with all data processing and storage performed securely off-site at the i-conX data centre in Dublin.

Accessing a-s-p

Access to the a-s-p service takes place via a secure web-enabled browser; and the a-s-p contract offers a monthly volume-dependant commercial model in lieu of the traditional software licence.

Speaking for i-conX, CEO Martin Browne welcomed the deal with Scarlet, commenting : "Scarlet is a prime example of a progressive multiplay European operator with complex and evolving interconnect traffic types.

"This win is further validation of recent development effort behind i-conX v7, which handles contemporary traffic types such as VoIP and content with ease".

On behalf of Scarlet, Peter Willems commented : "Due to their in-depth knowledge of the interconnect business, i-conX has been able to understand the Scarlet interconnect model, and work co-operatively to create the right configuration".

"After a few months, we have already been able to optimize and manage our interconnect voice streams, and to minimize delays in sending invoices. Furthermore the reconciliation can be executed more easily and accurately".

About Scarlet

Scarlet is an infrastructure-based communication service provider offering fixed-line and mobile voice, internet and data services for residential, SME, corporate and wholesale



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customers in the Netherlands and Belgium.

Scarlet was founded in 1992, since when it has grown its business organically and through strategic acquisition. In 2005, Scarlet introduced its bundled offering 'Scarlet ONE'. Scarlet services approximately 350,000 customers, of which almost half are broadband customers. Scarlet recorded revenues of euro 145m in 2005, which represents a growth of 15% year on year.



Pictured L to R : Brendan Rogan (i-conX), Marcel Olieman (Scarlet), Danielle Cussen (i-conX), Peter Willems (Scarlet), Vincent Coessens (i-conX), Gavin Stewart (i-conX)

STOP PRESS : GSM giant MagtiCom signs with i-conX

Georgian GSM operator MagtiCom is the latest operator to select the fully licensed installation of the i-conX interconnect billing system.

Georgia boasts a population of 5m, with mobile penetration of 36%, and annual growth of 37%.



Based in Tbilisi, Magti is the leading mobile operator in Georgia, enjoying majority market share in competition with mobile provider Geocell.

A full report on this operator will appear in the next issue of i-conXpress.



2008 events . . .

Come and visit us at the following selection of events :

CAPACITY MENA 2008

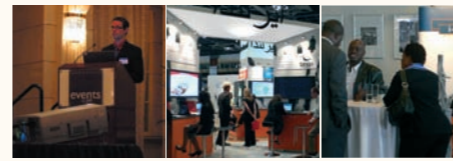
Venue Crowne Plaza, Dubai, U.A.E.
Date 25-26 February, 2008

TMF MANAGEMENT WORLD 2008

Venue Le Meridien Hotel, Dubai, U.A.E.
Date 3-5 March, 2008

CASPIAN TELECOMS 2008

Venue Hilton Hotel, Istanbul, Turkey
Date 17-18 April, 2008



BILLING SYSTEMS 2008

Venue Beurs van Berlage, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Date 8-12 June, 2008

MORE INFORMATION

Please refer to our EVENTS page at www.iconxsolutions.com for up to date developments.



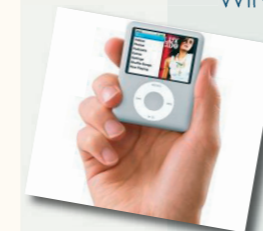
i-conXpress

Issue one, 2008

The international newsletter
for Interconnect Billing



WIN an iPod Nano!!



To win this issue's Quiz, please consider the 3 illustrations (opposite).

Each of these pictures is an excerpt from the world map. But can you identify which country is depicted in each?

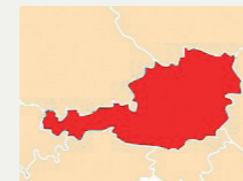
The area in red represents the mystery country . . .

Send your answers by e-mail to : info@iconxsolutions.com

Q.1 - Which country?



Q.2 - Which country?



Q.3 - Which country?



Send your answers to info@iconxsolutions.com!

i-conXpress

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Interconnect in an IP World
Scarlet signs with i-conX
Least Cost Routing functionality
Latest news round-up

FREE Quiz - win an i-Pod!

// INSIDE

< PLUS

Internet Accounting ... in the IP world ...

MARTIN BROWNE
CEO :: i-conX solutions

Mobile Operators are evolving towards packet infrastructures using the GSM & UMTS air interfaces & 3G. Fixed Network Operators (FNOs) are deploying Next-Generation Networks (NGNs) and ISPs & ASPs are offering an ever-increasing range of services. The common protocol for all these networks and services is IP (Internet Protocol).

All these commercial entities have the common objective of delivering traffic to each other in a profitable and cost effective way. Although these services can often be delivered via the Internet, there are issues around reliability, security and, above all, quality of service.

Service Providers are looking for an IP backbone that enables them to transfer traffic between each other under controlled circumstances, in compliance with minimum quality criteria using a business model that compensates everyone involved in delivering the service.

The IP backbone would be used to support a range of services including:

* IP voice telephony services i.e. Voice over IP (VoIP). The voice service will be allocated a conversational Quality of Service (QoS) traffic class. Critically, tight end-to-end latency control must be maintained for voice telephony services to work effectively

* Video telephony which, as with IP voice telephony, can originate on a circuit or packet bearer. Video telephony is a real-time service that also needs a conversational QoS traffic class

* Push-to-talk over Cellular (PoC) that provides the ability for one person to communicate with a pre-defined list of others without the inconveniences, long set-up delays or inefficiencies of a circuit-switched conference call

* Instant messaging (IM) between two or more people using text messages (and possibly small graphical images). IM usually relies on presence information to ensure that messages can be delivered to the recipients instantly

* Presence that provides a way for users to communicate their status (online, offline, busy etc.) to another user or set of users

* Video share services that allow users to share video (either

live or pre-recorded) with another user, whilst maintaining a voice call

Service Providers will need to sign up to Service Level Agreements (SLAs) and Interconnect Contracts that support the following key business principles:

- * End-to-End service delivery
- * Service interoperability - universal service interworking (fixed and mobile)
- * Customer protection - against identity theft, fraud, invasion of privacy, unsolicited content etc.
- * Security, including isolating the IP backbone from the Internet
- * Service Quality: Conformance to strict SLAs defined for each service
- * Redundancy/Availability: Using alternate routing and multiple Points of Interconnect
- * Flexibility: Allow the rapid deployment of new services
- * A Billing model where the initiating party pays and cascading revenues are distributed from end-to-end
- * Value-based pricing with the ability to offer different end user prices depending on consumer preferences and quality selection

The IP backbone will support three interconnect models:

* **Bilateral - Transport Only:** A bilateral connection between two Service Providers using the IP backbone Transport layer with guaranteed QoS end-to-end. Each Service Provider pays their IP backbone provider for the transport capacity, depending on the capacity and the level of QoS provided. Because the bilateral agreement is between the Service Providers, the payment of any termination charges is a matter for the Service Providers.

* **Bilateral - Service and Transport:** A bilateral connection between two Service Providers using both the IP backbone Service layer and the Transport layer with guaranteed QoS end-to-end. In this case, the IP backbone provider also supplies cascading interconnect payment facilities. This enables an originating Service Provider to make a single payment to the IP backbone provider who pays the termination charge to the terminating Service Provider.

* **Multilateral - Hubbing:** A multilateral connection using Hub functionality. Multilateral connectivity is where traffic is routed from one Service Provider to many other Service Providers through a single agreement with the IP backbone provider. The Multilateral Hub Service provides QoS transport and cascading interconnect payments to a number of interconnect partners via a single agreement between the Service Provider and IP backbone provider. This 'one-to-many' model is operationally highly efficient for the Service Provider.

The benefits of using this 'one to many' model include:

- * One commercial agreement opens connectivity and service interworking to tens or hundreds of other Service Providers
- * The ability to pass interconnect payments between the originating Service Provider and the terminating Service Provider without a direct contractual relationship between the two parties
- * Routing traffic to other Service Providers can be handled via a single route between the originating network and the IP backbone provider
- * The ability to manage and maintain an adequate level of QoS, security, anti-fraud, etc. from end to end

The challenge for the next generation of interconnect is to deliver secure, reliable and high quality services over an IP network that links fixed and mobile operators, ISPs and other service providers together. For this to work everyone involved in delivering these services must be compensated for their efforts and the mechanism for this is IP interconnect accounting.



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Reconciliation : Bridging the widening gap

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Reconciliation, in the interconnect world, is the process of verifying that the interconnect statement received from another operator is acceptable for payment.

Reconciliation margins are widening. This is due to the increased pace of change and complexity of interconnect agreements. Many operators are changing their interconnect rates more frequently in response to competitive pressures, and, even if your information is kept up to date, it's unlikely that every one of your partners will be perfectly in step with you - meaning rating inaccuracies will be inevitable.

The trend to introduce cost-based interconnect pricing has also led to rating models based around the use of network components, rather than on distance, causing yet further complexities.

Billing rules, such as the 2006 changes which UK operator British Telecom implemented for calculating incoming and outgoing bills for number translation

services, content rating, percentage revenue share models and complex discounting, create more complexity. It's no wonder that many operators give up trying to reconcile their invoices and pay whatever figure arrives in the post. - or, alternatively, decide to tolerate a crude reconciliation margin.



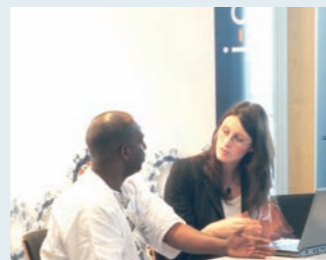
The simplest and most effective solution is to monitor the process as it happens. Traditionally, dialogue between interconnect partners only took place after the end of the billing period. But if live information can be accessed and monitored daily - cash flow positions, value of calls sent or received, cumulative positions and projected totals etc. - then the challenge becomes easier to manage. Achieving this needs two things : good business processes, and a good interconnect billing system.

Event round-up 2007-08 : i-conX team in action worldwide



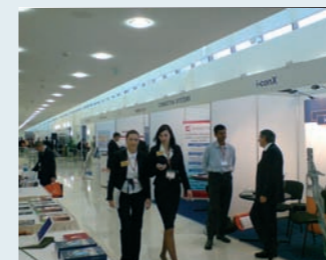
GSM-3G Middle East, 2007
(Dubai, UAE)

Representatives of the Irish Government, including Minister of Trade John McGuinness TD, greet i-conX marketing VP Gavin Stewart at GSM-3G ME (September 07).



IIR Billing Africa 2007 (Cape Town,
South Africa)

i-conX Customer Relationship Manager Michelle Dervan demonstrates the v7 system to delegates at this year's "Billing Africa" event (September 07)



TeleEvo 2007 (Moscow, Russia)

i-conX CEO Martin Browne led the 2-day interconnect training workshop for TMF delegates at this year's Russian expo, TeleEvo07



IIR Interconnection 2008
(Amsterdam, The Netherlands)

i-conX Analyst Vincent Coessens takes questions from the floor at IIR's Interconnection Conference, 2008. (January 08)

Route optimisation for carriers : i-conX "LCR" functionality

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Senior Business Analyst :: i-conX solutions

Operators and international carriers face an increasingly diverse set of choices for routing and terminating their traffic. It is essential that they manage these choices efficiently, in order to optimize the financial benefits and avoid losing vital margin.

The market has traditionally offered a number of specialist LCR system providers, but these solutions require a significant technical and commercial commitment, and for many service providers the ROI may not justify this approach.

i-conX approaches the issue by applying the right methodology to each individual situation. For some customers, automated provisioning onto the network is appropriate, and the Least Cost Routing is interfaced directly onto the switch(es). But for many customers, manual provisioning makes more sense, and here i-conX provides all of the functional benefits of LCR in an easy-to-access package.

Carrier Management Module

Through its Carrier Management Module, i-conX provides an effective and powerful set of LCR, Switch & Rates analysis reports. In this article we will take a quick look at three of the most important.

1. 'Historic Routing'

Historic Routing provides detailed analysis of past traffic, and asks the question : "what should we have done?" Here, the i-conX system runs actual data, generating a traffic report by destination as it was routed for the chosen period. It highlights the LCR savings you would have made had the traffic been routed optimally, and allows further analysis of each destination by drill down. Having drilled down, a list is displayed for each destination, showing the routes which were available, the routes which were chosen, and the cost/savings figures for each.

The Historic Routing report offers an excellent opportunity to review and form an opinion on current routing effectiveness, before committing to work with actual traffic.

2. 'LCR Predictive'

LCR Predictive takes historic data and applies current or future rates to it, to ask the question : "how can we do it better?". The system allows you to set required criteria - such as the date of the rates you wish to use, or the date of the actual sample of traffic you wish to use.



"Operators and carriers face an increasingly diverse set of choices for routing their traffic"

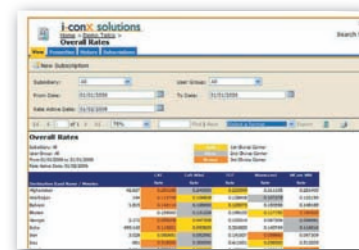
i-conX then looks at all the possible routes for the sample traffic, and produces a report containing recommendations for the 1st, 2nd and 3rd choice routings.

Increasingly, rates are not the sole factor for operators when determining routing choices - a significant new factor is Quality. The LCR report aggregates a range of Quality indicators (eg. ASR) with the rates for each route, in order to provide a fully comprehensive routing recommendation.

3. 'Overall Rates' report

All i-conX customers benefit from our powerful 'Reporting Services' module (see i-conXpress issue Winter 06-07). As well as letting you create from scratch your own bespoke reports, this particular module also lets you take standard LCR reports and run them through its enhanced functionality meaning easier exports to Excel, pdf etc.

One of the most interesting reports is the 'Overall Rates' report. This gives you at-a-glance LCR recommendations by showing best possible routes classified as gold, silver and bronze choices. It's a nice example of how intelligent data display formatting can help the user select the right choices intuitively.



Overall Rates report

LCR reports

The above examples represent a sample selection of the routing analysis and rate reports available as standard in i-conX v7. Other reports include Switch and Route, National Grid, Call Cleardown Cause and Carrier Traffic and Rates.

As i-conX continually invests in its product roadmap to stay at the cutting edge, so we commit to adding value for customers big and small.

In this way we can liberate the power of LCR functionality to benefit our entire customer base, as part of our standard v7 offer.

For more information, please contact info@iconxsolutions.com.