

EWE TEL

Telsis Customer Experience

“...it’s the number portability application that we are most proud of. The speed of implementation was very impressive and it’s enabled us to rationalise and take full control of our heterogeneous network, even as it continues to grow.”

Heiner Meyer,
Manager of Voice Services,
EWE TEL



Simple-to-programme intelligent network (IN) controllers from Telsis are helping fast-growing German telco EWE TEL generate substantial operational efficiencies and bottom-line gains as it absorbs and integrates the networks of acquired former rivals.

One of Germany’s largest regional carriers now with some half a million wireline and mobile subscribers, the Oldenburg-area operator has made eight acquisitions in the last 7 years, keeping alive local brands but behind the scenes integrating legacy infrastructure into a single network.

Telsis technology, first deployed by EWE TEL in 2000, has been a key enabler, with Telsis signalling protocol expertise and EWE TEL’s in-house use of the Telsis IN controllers’ intuitive programming environment combining to swiftly and cost-effectively bring platforms from Siemens, Nokia and Alcatel under seamless central control.

Latest success for the Oldenburg-based internal engineering team at EWE TEL is the completion of a network-wide roll-out of number portability – a project whose conclusion has netted a substantial reduction in fees paid to other operators and slashed operational overheads by centralising control over call redirection.

Number portability is an issue for all operators in deregulated markets, but a particularly pressing one in Germany where more than 40 telcos compete for business. Subscribers can and do move their accounts regularly, taking their original or cherished numbers with them. In this environment, a dialling prefix is rarely a reliable indicator of current home network, creating the need for a huge and constantly changing national database that enables operators to discover the real current home network hosting each number - and subscribers to receive calls whatever network they are currently with.

~ One of the largest regional operators in Germany

~ Centrally control heterogenous network with Telsis IN controllers

~ Slashed operational overheads by centralising control over call redirection

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Operators without the technology to access and contribute to the database have to rely simply on routing calls to the network that originally issued a number. If a subscriber has moved on, that network re-routes the call and levies a charge on the originating operator. Charges can compound quickly and it is easy to see how larger operators handling large volumes of calls to ported numbers can construct a business case for deploying number portability. However, smaller operators with lower volumes often struggle to justify what can be significant up-front capital expenditure.

This was exactly the dilemma EWE TEL originally faced, but as subscribers numbers continued to grow, the pressure to save on redirection charges became irresistible. At the time, the operator was standardised on Siemens network hardware and had yet to embark on its major acquisition drive. The scale of the challenge was significant but manageable, and number portability was initially implemented on existing Siemens service controllers.

However, as EWE TEL began to acquire other operators, it was faced with the new problem of how to cost-effectively handle an increasingly complex mix of different vendors' network hardware. The Siemens platform and switches not only required costly upgrades and proved difficult and time-consuming to programme, but the controller was simply unable to cope with Nokia infrastructure owned by a number of the acquired operators.

The solution was the deployment of Telsis Ocean fast SCP IN service control points, delivering the double win of giving always-available control of any variety of mainstream vendor switch, and, through the Telsis graphical service creation environment, enabling EWE TEL itself to develop, deploy and manage a range of advanced voice services – among them number portability.

The number portability application – built by EWE TEL in just days – required no extra hardware or upgrades to existing switches. It was initially rolled out to re-route ported mobile calls, then, in phases, re-route calls to wireline numbers too. A fastSCP references a database of all ported numbers and using INAP signalling instructs the appropriate switch where to route calls. The whole process takes a few milliseconds and is entirely transparent to callers.

Heiner Meyer, manager of voice services at EWE TEL, continues to be impressed by the flexibility and simplicity of programming of the Telsis platforms. "We have rolled out several other innovative services by coding applications in-house using the Telsis graphical service creation environment. These include a value added services platform for third-party operators, intelligent call routing and interactive services. But it's the number portability application that we are most proud of. The speed of implementation was very impressive and it's enabled us to rationalise and take full control of our heterogeneous network, even as it continues to grow. What's more, the solution is NGN-ready which means we can plan for a smooth migration."

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