

# Mobile and Wireless Technology in Utilities Sector

## Overview

The Utility Sector is one of the most open and competitive markets in the world. It has come a long way in the past decade or so since the utilities were privatized. Energy and Utilities are being transformed by the combined challenges of competition, consolidation, cost reduction and the creation of new revenue streams.

The adoption of mobile applications and wireless technology is providing a powerful solution to utility remote field force workers. By implementing real time data access - it is bringing instant, up-to-date information and improving productivity throughout the utility organisation by improving communications.

Now more and more utilities are deploying wireless and mobile technology integration including seamless roaming capabilities as part of their long term strategy, to ensure quality and continuity of customer care at lower costs.

## Facing The Challenge

One positive move in creating and maintaining excellence in quality of service is by adopting Seamless Roaming as part of the mobile data strategy.

New technologies such as Seamless Roaming, and new applications of existing technologies, such as GPRS or 3G, are being used in the search for operational efficiency to achieve mobile data from any location. New standards such as Wifi will help facilitate access to and the sharing of data for employees anywhere within the organisation, and prove to be a vital tool in all business objectives.

Reliability and ease of use is king when deploying any mobile computing solution. Brand helps remove any obstacles and ensures the user stays part of the organisation, both reliably and securely.

## The Technology

Brand's Apollo solution, matured over 14 years of successful deployment, is making mobile data a reality for business-critical data applications using Seamless Roaming for organisations across the world. Providing a secure connection for the mobile user whilst travelling from location to location, it removes the uncertainty of using a wireless network to transfer vital information by transparently integrating GSM, GPRS and Wifi networking with LAN environments, both within the enterprise, and in the field and provides automatic recovery from dropped connections with out repeating any data transactions and assures that data is never lost, corrupted or compromised.

Brand's mobile data solutions offers mobile users the added benefits of high compression levels, fast packet loss recovery and dynamic seamless roaming between Wifi, GPRS, 3G and other bearer networks depending on availability during the same transaction.

Another major concern for utility organizations would be the security of data information and network security. Brand provides significant protection to the network and data by using authentication and encryption security which complies with all the standards.

## **Practical Solutions**

### ***Electricity Meter Reader***

The meter engineer is visiting a customer at their home. By using a handheld device connecting to an office LAN via GPRS, the engineer can access the customers record and update it in real time whilst on the customers property. The engineer also notices that the customer now requires a new meter as the old one is very dated and should be upgraded. The engineer places the order request immediately and is given a date from HQ to when the new meter will be replaced.

The whole mobile data experience has made the engineer more responsive to customers needs and actions then in a more effective and efficient manner.

### ***Site Surveyor***

A utility site surveyor is visiting a new process plant. Using a Tablet PC and the internal company wifi technology, they can instantly read the site plans and records on the way to the process area and assess the situation before he arrives. On arrival he updates the records using the assessment made and changes certain information and this is instantly sent back to the central LAN, updating immediately on the system.

This process has been made more efficient by the surveyor being able to access and update the company records instantly whilst on the move - for a more efficient and faster service.

## **Summary**

Mobile Data represents an important step towards a new way of working within utility organisations. Both the organisation and workforce benefit from the implementation of mobile technologies; as it makes the working process more effective and efficient. In addition, customer service is dramatically improved by information being made available wherever the service is being carried out and insuring records are accurately updated.

Brand's solutions are deployed in many organisations across the world and Brand specialises in implementing mission critical wireless strategies. Brand's Apollo solutions makes mobile data a reality using session management. It removes the uncertainty of using a wireless network to transfer vital information and ensures compatibility with almost all data devices and networks resulting in a future-proofed investment for any utility organisation, allowing access to all IP-based applications from the Head Office, customers homes or in the field