



# APN upgrade improves Siemens' remote work capabilities



Liquid Intelligent Technologies implements a single managed platform for APNs, making remote work easier for employees and saving the company a fortune.

The principle behind an Access Point Name (APN) is quite simple - it is merely a gateway between a high speed mobile network and another computer network, accessing either the public Internet or a private virtual private network (VPN).

Essentially, an APN is a unique identifier that allows a connection to the network and identifies the data access services associated with the user's account. However, in a large organisation, APNs can easily become a challenge to manage, especially if multiple vendors are involved, and it can become costly and inefficient to operate the business in this manner.

This was the key challenge facing Siemens when the Covid-19 pandemic swept across the globe and led to huge lockdowns that prevented normal operations. The fact that employees were no longer allowed to come into the office, and were instead expected to work from home instead, led Siemens to deploy managed services. These were designed not only to save time, but just as crucially, to educate its workforce around the use of more advanced technologies.

This inevitably altered the way that the company's business was conducted and this, in turn, led to what the organisation refers to as 'growing pains'. One of the biggest challenges the business faced was the fact that the various APNs used by Siemens were supplied by a range of different vendors. The primary concern here was that this diversity created an unsatisfactory and time-consuming environment for users within the business, with what amounted to separate vendors and network coverage in certain areas.

In addition, any changes to the APN status quo involved ensuring that Siemens itself was properly secured, while still allowing customers a level of discretion with regard to exactly what they were allowed to access on the company's VPN. Finally, the company also sought to use their existing SIMs - instead of deploying all new ones - and chose instead to import these numbers to the new APN.



## Close partnership

To achieve these goals, Siemens turned to Liquid Intelligent Technologies, which quickly understood that what the enterprise really needed was a single managed platform, one where multiple SIM cards from all three leading vendors in the industry could be managed.

To this end, Liquid Intelligent Technologies assigned a virtual team to assist with the installations and partnered with i-Online in the provision of a client-centred solution. As part of the implementation, Liquid Intelligent Technologies also provided employee training on the newly deployed platform, as well as ensuring that access to the administrators within Siemens was provided, where necessary.

Working closely with i-Online, the two companies made sure to undertake the bulk SIM swaps that were a critical part of the operation. In some instances Siemens needed new SIM cards delivered, with Liquid Intelligent Technologies finding ways to ensure that these requirements were met. The nature of the lockdowns and the need for enforced social distancing led to the company crafting some interesting and innovative ways to deliver this particular implementation.

The complexity of the operation created its own unique challenges, such as ensuring that Siemens had access to its critical applications, while at the same time providing them with the option to block certain other applications on the company network - such as Netflix - which were viewed as problematic, because they would cause a spike in the usage bill.

Naturally certain employees, such as those in the marketing departments within Siemens, needed to have full open access on the APN, due to their specific job requirements, which included the need to access social media platforms. Demands such as these could best be met by a managed solution and platform that cut across vendors.



## Significant savings

Following the completion of the project, Siemens pronounced that it was very pleased with new APN solution, as this implementation had resulted in massive cost savings for the company. The enterprise determined that there has been savings in the region of 40%, when compared directly to the money expended on the previous system.

The project succeeded due to the joint contributions of Siemens and Liquid Intelligent Technologies, in respect of time, available resources and training. Furthermore, these joint contributions continue, as the two organisations still meet on a monthly basis to discuss issues and ensure that the service remains up to standard. These meetings are also geared towards identifying any challenges or opportunities to enhance both the existing project and the partnership in general.

Siemens points out that the project met all the key expectations of the company: namely that the project provided them with cost savings, improved efficiencies and a centrally managed platform, which includes a portal that can be used to allocate the SIM cards needed per user.

In addition to this, the platform is also able to manage the company's firewall for security purposes, as well as its connectivity, in order to connect securely to the APN throughout the various stages of lockdown this ultimately allows the enterprise's employees to continue to work efficiently, securely and effectively from home.

