

INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

A clear understanding within the telecom community has risen out of the chaos of the last few years; making the right operating support system (OSS) choice can save you from your operational woes, or bury you under them. There is little doubt that starting off with a strong, flexible OSS will establish the mechanism for orderly growth within your organisation, but keeping costs within the budgetary constraints of the present economy is also critical – because cost-consciousness growth equals value in your investment.

Eftia OSS Solutions Inc., an Ottawa, Canada-based firm, has a solid grasp on how to put value into your investment, as well as a proven track record in OSS development and deployment. The return on investment (ROI) from the organisation has a minimum payback period, and the value proposition comes in terms of increase in revenue, as well as a reduction in

to demand the standardisation of applications so they can plug-and-play with one another. As software applications within the space evolve towards well-crafted 'products' that can be purchased, rather than built to specifications, a new direction emerges in operational support, one that will aid customers in automating their back-office faster and more seamlessly than before.

Billing is a good example of this. In the beginning, telecom providers wrote their own unique billing systems, but today they can purchase multiple billing applications that will work in conjunction with other back-office software, allowing them once again to concentrate on their core business. The Master.Scribe suite targets those applications (inventory management, services order management, number management and customer care), which are evolving in a similar fashion to billing, with the focus on making

CREATING SIGNIFICANT VALUE IN YOUR OSS INVESTMENT

WITH THE RAPIDLY CHANGING FACE OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND THE FLUCTUATING ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF THE MARKET, FINDING THE RIGHT SOLUTION TO THEIR BACK-OFFICE REQUIREMENTS HAS BECOME A MAJOR PRIORITY FOR TODAY'S TELCOS.

both manpower and capital costs.

Master.Scribe, Eftia's integrated suite of OSS solutions, enables customers to provision services (basic telephone services, long distance services, DSL, high-speed data lines between sites, etc.), control inventory (switches, routers, cell sites, etc.), support operations (trouble tickets), and manage numbers (telephone numbers, internet addresses, etc.) all in an automated package that gets you to market faster and at a lower cost.

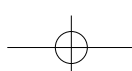
The value in the investment comes in having flexible and re-configurable software that allows Eftia's clients to substantially increase operational efficiencies. This allows them to move their concentration away from application development and back-office integration, and lets them get back to running their telecom business.

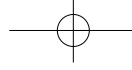
This focus on core business, along with the downturn in telecommunications, has forced providers

them interoperable with other existing software packages. Integration and interoperability means less time and money spent on software development and more focus on maximising your OSS investment.

An organisation's ability to create common building blocks that can transform the purchase patterns of telecom providers from build to buy is key to who will rise to the top of the present telecom market. As there is no Microsoft in this space, any set of complimentary vendors, who successfully address the needs of telecommunications and can deliver solutions to the providers, will put themselves in a position to be the dominant players within the next few years. Understanding this, Eftia is actively participating in the standards community and delivering interoperability via application programming interfaces (APIs).

Recognising the importance of integration between its products and external applications (billing,

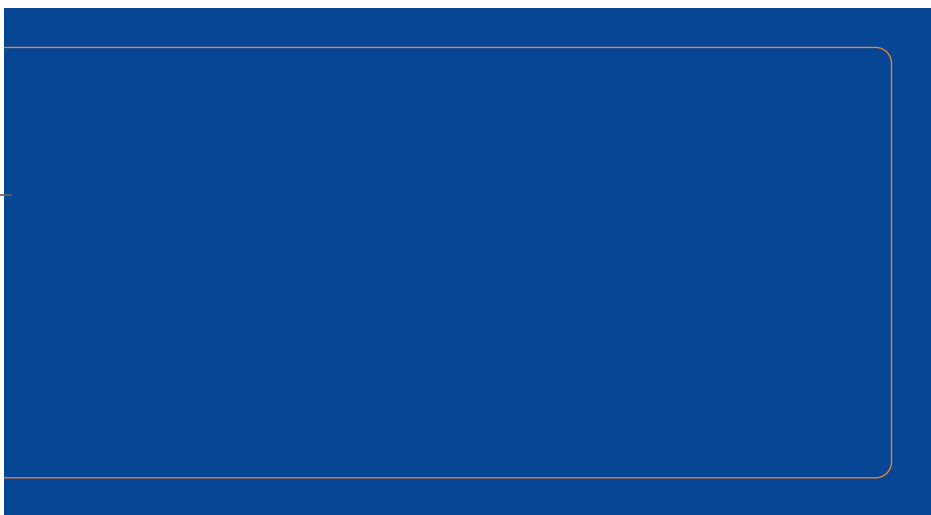




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service activation, network management, etc.), the company's products minimise the complexity of integration, through an extensive suite of APIs, to form seamless, end-to-end, business solutions for its customers. These APIs also support a variety of data transfer protocols and mechanisms (e.g. CORBA, JAVA, XML, C, SQL, ODBC, JDBC, CLI, DDE, OLE). Eftia's OSS through Java initiative (OSS/J) will allow for the introduction of technology to support OSS solutions for next generation networks. It will also reduce integration cost throughout the value chain and foster a market of interoperable and interchangeable OSS components.

Standards-based software components that integrate well with each other are revolutionising this industry. As such, the major business thrust has now moved from services (or the build-as-you-go



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model) to products (the build once, sell a lot model). For a 'product' company there are many critical decision points that yield direct benefits to the serving customer set, most importantly, customers can use the products quickly.

With Eftia's product-based OSS, customers can be productive faster, be able to adjust to changes in market conditions, and at the same time maintain a reasonable cost structure. The company has found this product-based approach effective for quick deployment of solutions as well as the realisation of related benefits – cost-effectiveness, flexibility and scalability.

In all, Master.Scribe enables customers to master their mission-critical business and operations processes, while reducing the time to market of services and lowering overall operational costs – creating a substantial value for their OSS investment. ■

