

Puzzling times – seeing the whole data picture

When building a jigsaw puzzle, each piece plays an integral role. At the end, when your perseverance pays off and all pieces are slotted all together, the complete picture is unveiled. A puzzle works in the same way as network systems; one piece alone is just a set of data with a very narrow vision, it is not until you can understand the full picture, all joined together, can network performance be effectively managed.

Unfortunately for CSPs, the network is not a static unchanging jigsaw puzzle, but a constantly changing conundrum. Impacted by the pace of change in the sector which has been amplified by NFV/SDN, Internet of Everything (IoE) and consumer usage habits. The complexities have been heightened by the sheer increase in demand.

Solving the complexity

IT and network teams juggle escalating data, serving more services, supporting more products, with increased network architecture. The complexity of managing this data is overwhelming, so simplification is needed, but how? Convergence of these systems is not viable, but rip-and-replace is not either. The investment made in these essential legacy operations is ginormous, so the only way is to federate the data into one single interface.

TM Forum catalyst project 'Maximizing profitability through NFV orchestration' looked into the value that could be achieved with OSS federation. Senior Director Barry Graham outlined the importance of such an approach to ensure network optimization, saying: "You need fast access to information from all those places to understand what to do."

Integrating network data into one simplified system, limits the impact on the legacy OSS systems. This allows each OSS system to continue its specific role, but feeding data into a single interface enables network teams to see the complete picture and efficiencies can be made in launching new services, or pinpointing and rectifying issues.

Marketing, customer service teams, finance, engineering, etc. all need access to various data too and they need it immediately, in real-time.

The real-time OSS challenge

A customer bill is no longer added up and calculated at the end of a calendar month. Or a customer choosing a new service, will not wait around for weeks for it to be activated. This is the digital world, where customer expected things immediately and like to view their bills, usage, etc. in real-time.

Speed is of the essence for OSS and networks teams. They must keep up and supply the support to set up new offers quickly, activate and provision new services as requested, and feed the monitoring data back into marketing and customer service teams' systems.

IoE will add to this real-time pressure as the systems need to be recorded in real-time and be identified to the right customer. With analyst firms predicting anywhere between 25 and 75 billion connected devices by 2020, CSPs better get ready.

There are many opportunities for CSPs to further monetize their networks, but the OSS support has to be there. Federating networks gives CSPs more than a fighting chance to stay a step ahead as the demand builds. TM Forum calculated in its [OSS Federation](#) report that federation of systems can create over 20 minutes of saving per call, at 1,000 calls per month, this could save a CSP \$1.68 million a year. Definitely worth puzzling over.

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