SIEMENS
Ingenuity for life

Meter-in-a-Box

Helping make communications 'on the go' a reality

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At first glance, Nathan and Michaela don't have much in common. Student Nathan is catching up on coursework between lectures – and arranging a date for the weekend. Meanwhile, businesswoman Michaela is calling the office whilst waiting for her flight at the airport. But there's one thing they do have in common: what they expect from their technology.

The average UK home now boasts over 8 connected devices. However, it's not just in the home that this usage is increasing. Expecting uninterrupted phone and wi-fi access while out and about is fast becoming the rule, not the exception. And it's not only consumers who expect continuous, broadcast-quality content anywhere, anytime, but commercial organisations as well.

Increasing capacity – a way forward
This puts considerable pressure on broadcasters and wireless network operators (WNOs) to cope. But finding new sites and building new towers and masts to cater for the growing demand is both costly and complex.

Our client is a communications and media services company that operates at the heart of the broadcast, satellite and mobile communications markets. By allowing WNOs to install their equipment as tenants at its thousands of sites around the UK – on towers, masts, pylons and rooftops – it can offer them a faster, more cost-effective way of improving their network capability.

The power consumption challenge
However, there was one potential snag. With typically just one power supply to each site, the main electricity meter would show overall energy consumption, but not where that energy was being used. With our client's tenants often accounting for as much as 80% of the load, a simple way of apportioning usage was needed: with reliable data to support accurate billing and energy efficiency initiatives.

Siemens' solution was to install sub-meters downstream from the primary meter at each site, which offer our clients an accurate view of their energy usage.

"Siemens sub-metering offers clients an accurate view of their energy usage"

"The benefits for our clients flow right through the chain"

Our solution

We installed, commissioned and maintained Siemens' Automatic Meter Read (AMR) sub-metering equipment as a fully managed service. This collects accurate consumption data and transmits it to our UK base for presentation back to the client. The meters are dialled through our own back-office systems, ensuring that data is always accurate and reliable.

Ideally, meters would be installed when other contractors were onsite, installing tenants' network equipment, to ensure that our client would not lose any consumption they could not cross-charge. However, with so many sites and tenants, it was sometimes difficult to meet such tight timescales.

An innovative approach was necessary – one we call 'Meter-in-a-Box'

Features

- Its unique aspect is that the AMR equipment is pre-built and mounted in a box with all the necessary connections; then commissioned and delivered with a pre-assigned Meter Point Administration Number (MPAN).
- Any qualified electrician can then install it at any time, eliminating all timescale roadblocks without compromising service quality.

- Meters then begin to collect and transmit accurate consumption data right away. Once installed, Siemens is notified of the location; and they are immediately set up in our UK data centre.

To date, over 450 units have been supplied.

Our client can view their data at any time through Vestigo®, our online data-visualisation software. Vestigo is extremely flexible: not only in how it can reflect the customer's structure, but also in respect of meter grouping, naming conventions and reporting processes, as well as controlled access to the data. Further analysis can be undertaken by Siemens if required.

Benefits

The benefits for our client flow right through the chain:

- With a fully supported service from Siemens, our client has a single, accountable point of contact.
- Sites can now go live for sub-metering whenever needed – meeting deadlines and eliminating the costs associated with meter downtime.
- Both our client and its tenants now have an accurate, daily power consumption picture. The client has no billing, cashflow or accrual issues;

and the tenants will not face any bills for energy that cannot be substantiated.
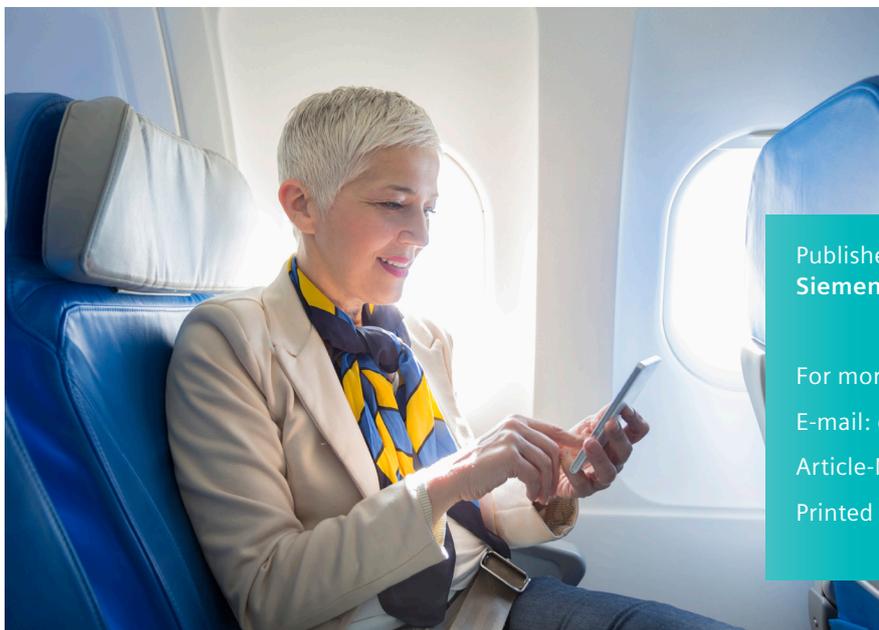
- Tenants can swiftly begin to use the host infrastructure and serve their customers without developing their own sites and masts: reducing cost and deployment time significantly.
- Meter-in-a-Box also removes a level of administration. Installing the box at the same time as their tenants' equipment removes the client's need to arrange additional permits to work, manage multiple points of contact, etc.

Combined with access to Siemens' secure national infrastructure, the Meter-in-a-Box is a great solution.

And of course, it helps ensure that both Nathan and Michaela can access the services they need and stay in touch without being confined to a desk. (Whether Nathan can arrange his date or not – well, that's another story!)

How can we help you?

To learn more about how our sub-metering, Meter-in-a-Box, or data collection and data aggregation services can work for you, please get in touch.