

Cycle30 Case Study

THE CHALLENGE

Cycle30* is a provider of order-to-cash billing services for communications, utility and machine-to-machine service operators. Its service is an innovative, cloud-hosted solution that offers a variety of tools from billing management to business intelligence. Headquartered in Seattle, Washington with satellite operations and data centers located across the region, Cycle30 is preparing for a rapid expansion of its customer base in the coming months. As a distributed company, Cycle30 depends on virtualization tools to conduct essential daily functions efficiently and effectively. Cycle30 is equally reliant on secure network services for its cloud-hosted platform. With potentially exponential growth just months away, Cycle30 requires a robust enterprise-level solution that can grow with it.

PRESENT AND FUTURE NEEDS

Cycle30's dependence on a "virtual" workplace means tools such as video conferencing must be fully available all the time. Running these important tools on Integra's robust network allows Cycle30 to capitalize on the cost savings of a distributed team and enable "virtual" operation as smooth as competitors working in a traditional office space. Geographically dispersed executives and staff routinely use a high bandwidth video conferencing solution for lengthy meetings and work-sessions during which a technical glitch would idle a meeting full of high-value people.

In addition, Cycle30's network service must accommodate high or fluctuating user traffic on its mission-critical billing platform without impacting performance.

*Cycle30 is a wholly owned subsidiary of General Communication, Inc.



» CASE STUDY



INDUSTRY: Provides hosted billing services for communications, utility and machine-to-machine services operators.

LOCATION: Seattle, Washington (headquarters)

INTEGRA SOLUTION:  Ethernet Services

“We are responsible for billing close to a hundred thousand dollars per hour... As you can imagine, we put a premium on reliability.”

James Dunlap, Cycle30 CEO

Looking to the future, Cycle30 is prepared for rapid, possibly exponential expansion of its operations and customer base resulting in:

- Greater bandwidth requirements
- Increased fluctuation of bandwidth usage
- Additional data centers
- More satellite offices
- A larger, more complex WAN

CYCLE30 CHOOSES INTEGRA CARRIER ETHERNET

To satisfy these stringent requirements, Cycle30 chose Integra’s robust Ethernet Services platform. With the most extensive fiber network in the region, Integra delivers carrier-class service with the scope and function demanded by discriminating customers like Cycle30.

The Integra Ethernet Services offering:

- Passes through the transport network on standards certified carrier-class service and eliminates a possible “last mile” failure point.
- Uses Layer 2 switching instead of Layer 3 routing to simplify deployment and future network growth, minimize maintenance requirements, and allow for more efficient use of the bandwidth purchased.
- Deploys via the Integra Metro Ethernet Network and provides secure connectivity.
- Is fully compliant with Metro Ethernet Forum (MEF) certifications MEF 9 and MEF 14.

When Cycle30 sought a reliable, secure, scalable, cost effective and manageable network, Integra’s Ethernet Services solution was the clear choice.

BOTTOM LINE BENEFITS: THE ROI OF CARRIER ETHERNET

For a company with the communication service provider background of Cycle30, choosing a network service was far more than a remedial “bill compare” or search for promotional discounts. Understanding the bottom line impact was critical.

Cost savings is a significant value proposition for Integra Ethernet Services.

- **Reliability** – Down time correlates to lost revenue.
- **Security** – Critical transmissions never leave Integra’s vast private network, eliminating many attack vectors.
- **Scalability** – The ability to optimize bandwidth usage contains costs.
- **Cost Effectiveness** – Integra’s network offers direct cost benefits with deployments and maintenance.
- **Customer Manageability** – Integra’s rapid service provisioning achieves go-live faster.

Reliability

Cycle30 demands a network that:

- Detects and recovers from incidents without impact to the customers
- Meets the most demanding quality and availability requirements
- Delivers rapid recovery time of less than 50ms when problems do occur

Cycle30 CEO James Dunlap quantified the importance of uptime based on just one customer’s billing cycle, “As an example, a single customer of ours processes \$700 million of billings per year. For just that one client, we are responsible for billing close to a hundred thousand dollars per hour. Even a few minutes of down time would be significant. An event at month or quarter’s end could severely impact revenue reporting. As you can imagine, we put a premium on reliability.”

Security

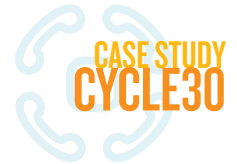
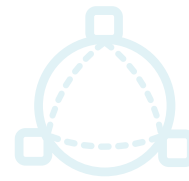
Cycle30 relies upon its networks for transport of critical traffic. A security breach could damage Cycle30’s reputation, erode customer confidence and cause lost revenue.

Integra’s private MPLS backbone encapsulates the customer traffic in tags, which direct the frame only to the desired destination. Because Integra’s network does not require Ethernet frames to traverse the public Internet, Integra’s transport enhances security without adding additional complexity or costly applications.

Scalability

Optimization of bandwidth usage is crucial for Cycle30. Integra’s Ethernet Services offering delivers scalable CoS in granular increments ranging from 3Mbps up to 10Gbps. Ethernet customers have access to a personalized web portal that can show performance and run diagnostics.





Cycle30's Senior Manager of Facilities and Infrastructure Jerry Gipson is enthusiastic about these features. "When your network demands vary, the ability to increase bandwidth on demand is just really good stuff. There are so many potential applications of such a flexible service," said Gipson.

Cost Effective

Cycle30's aggressive growth plans mean that existing locations have challenging bandwidth requirements. In addition, Cycle30 plans to add regional offices as it grows its operations.

The scope of Integra's network, with one of the largest Ethernet capable networks in the marketplace, combines a coverage and flexibility that other carriers cannot match. Integra can deploy service in more locations with lower infrastructure costs and an easier installation process

Customer Manageability

Rapid service provisioning helps Cycle30 turn up a new customer faster than would have otherwise been possible. That speed to market directly impacts earnings.

"If we were to go live to a new customer with an average sized billing base even five days ahead of schedule, we would begin realizing revenue that much sooner. This is significant for us and was a major factor in our choosing Integra," noted Dunlap.

ETHERNET SERVICES FOR A GROWING ENTERPRISE

Integra's service has far exceeded Cycle30's expectations.

Integra Ethernet Services offers Cycle30:

- **Flexibility** upon which Cycle30 can rely
- **Security** derived from critical transmissions never leaving Integra's network
- **Scalability** that can meet a strategic need in a nimble fashion
- **Cost effectiveness** through Ethernet Services simple implementation
- **Customer manageability** courtesy of automated tools for network maintenance

For Cycle30, the bottom line on reliability is measured by zero fault tolerance. The company relies on Ethernet Services flexibility to enable The Cycle30 business.

"We count on technology to foster teamwork; therefore we depend on connectivity to conduct project work via video conference," said Dunlap. "The flexibility of the network is at the center of our ability to operate virtually with more efficiency than competitors working in a traditional office environment."

Network security is equally vital to Cycle30, but the firm's IT team has better things to do than constantly wonder, "Where has our data been?"

With Integra Ethernet Services, Cycle30's traffic never leaves Integra's private network. Integra offers Cycle30 the opportunity to expand and add locations without its mission critical traffic ever leaving the dedicated Integra network.

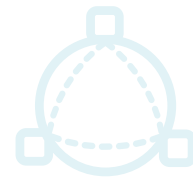
Cycle30 CEO Jim Dunlap knows that the ability to add new locations quickly is a competitive advantage. "We are going to need to make rapid changes, not spend months trying to get things implemented," he said.

"The flexibility of the network is at the center of our ability to operate virtually with more efficiency than competitors working in a traditional office environment."

James Dunlap, Cycle30 CEO

When Cycle30 needs to move faster or change direction, Integra and their Ethernet offering are ready and able. When Cycle30 moved into its new Seattle headquarters, several construction delays forced the company to ask Integra to reschedule network installation multiple times. However, at the conclusion of the deployment, Gipson said, "The initial installation happened on time with minimal impact on the IT Team – despite issues related to timely building access. Integra's team showed a high level of professionalism by being on time, doing good prep work, and effectively executing their install. Technicians were flexible in dealing with numerous logistical changes. Integra's team demonstrated expertise and knew what they were doing."

Gipson and his team can monitor, diagnose and centrally manage the network using standards-based vendor independent tools. When changes need to be made – such as an increase in call volumes to a location – the Cycle30 IT team can count on Integra to quickly provide assistance to modify their service and even dynamically increase bandwidth. This allows Cycle30's people to focus their attention on more mission critical, high-value business requirements.



A flexible and scalable partner for the future

In the end, Cycle30 selected Integra and its Ethernet service because those involved knew Integra’s responsive and reliable service didn’t end with the installation and cut over. A good provider must be ready when and where their customers need them.

“Integra does not just sell you a service and that is the last you hear from them. They remain involved and responsive – more so than any other carrier I have ever worked with,” said Gipson.

For Cycle30, growth requirements are multi-dimensional. Tactically, optimization of bandwidth usage keeps both platform and operations fully functional in an ever-changing environment. Strategically, the ability to scale both the operation and platform quickly is a competitive advantage.

The Integra Ethernet Services solution frees Cycle30 from labor-intensive networking functions. As Cycle30 grows, the network can grow with it. Gipson indicated, “We will be evolving our Seattle location into an actual command-and-control center and will need the robust dashboard that Integra is offering. We will integrate our operations with their systems, creating a centralized solution that provides complete control of all our technology services.”

“In terms of planning, it is more a matter of having a partner who can deliver a wide array of services to the most possible locations. With a broad product portfolio and robust network Integra is a powerful partner for us and our relationship will become increasingly important going forward,” said Gipson.

Integra’s Ethernet Services technology gives Cycle30 a powerful platform from which to rapidly grow and prepare for success.

The network and systems team focuses on optimizing performance rather than fixing problems. The operation and the platform coexist in a fully functioning, symbiotic environment. Instead of worrying about the network vendor, the CEO and his distributed team are able to focus on operations and planning for growth. Partnered with Integra, Cycle30 is moving forward to a promising future.



ABOUT INTEGRA TELECOM ETHERNET SERVICES

Integra is a provider of enterprise grade networking, communications and IT solutions. Our highly reliable network serves 3,000 route miles of Metropolitan Area Networks (MANs) and 5,000 miles of long-haul fiber. Integra’s offering provides customers with a platform to grow with their changing needs, and the Class of Service capabilities that enable prioritization of voice, video, and internet applications for optimal performance. This Certified Metro Ethernet Forum offering is one of the industry’s most advanced solutions on the market today.

VISIT

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