Digital West

Gaining a centralized network infrastructure management system

PROJECT AT A GLANCE

Project Type
Operational fiber optic solutions

Location
San Luis Obispo, California

Applications
Managing resources more efficiently and increasing level of productivity

Software Implemented
Fiber Manager

CUSTOMER BENEFITS

• Efficient communication, planning and reporting

• Flexible data modeling

• More accurate and efficient network management

• Improved management of advanced fiber-optic and coax networks

Digital West is an IT Infrastructure company located in San Luis Obispo, California that has been in operation since 1998. The company has a multi-tenant data center that houses infrastructure for local, regional, and national technology companies and municipalities. Digital West also delivers high-speed broadband to several of its customers, enabling them to have high-speed Internet access to their co-located servers. The primary objective of Digital West is to provide quality technology services and top level customer service to the business community.

Digital West has used Schneider Electric technology since July of 2012, when it implemented Fiber Manager.

Challenges

Having provided quality service for more than 14 years, in 2011 Digital West realized that its growth had surpassed the capabilities of its current system for collecting and managing its rapidly growing fiber optic network. Before Digital West began using Schneider Electric's Fiber Manager, it was documenting its network of technology infrastructure with a file-based solution. The IT Infrastructure company was using several manually-updated methods to track and map its fiber network, including

Make the most of your energy℠

Schneider Electric

spreadsheets, Visio drawings and hand-written notes. This form of data management was unreliable and cumbersome as employees were required to spend significant time searching for data in numerous locations.

"As our company began to grow, we realized that the system for tracking and mapping our network was no longer viable." said Fred Dyste, senior project manager for Digital West. "We didn't have accurate controls over our infrastructure, and the absence of a unified data management system made it difficult to keep track of network information."

In addition to using a manual system to manage its data, Digital West was creating its splice tables by hand using basic Excel spreadsheets. As the network became larger and more complex, this time-intensive process required the company to use significant resources to keep the grids up-to-date.

Digital West wanted to find a solution that would help map, plan, design and manage its fiber optic network.

Solution

In December of 2011 Digital West began its search for fiber management software. Through the research process, it became clear that the company wanted a solution that could be easily integrated with its Microsoft® SQL Server®, and had an easy to use interface.

After a competitive bidding process with three fiber manager product companies, Digital West selected Schneider Electric's Fiber Manager because it could be easily integrated with its existing system and it provided an intuitive visual interface to help the company design and manage its network.

"We're a small company and this was a big investment for us," said Dyste. "During the selection process, we asked a lot of tough questions about the various product functions and how it could benefit our company; this is when Schneider Electric really came to the forefront as the clear choice."

The Bottom Line

Digital West has experienced improved accuracy and efficiency in numerous aspects of its business since the implementation of Fiber Manager.

For example, the IT Infrastructure company is now able to accurately allocate its resources and budget for upcoming capacity, and plan for future development.

"We are now able to identify how much glass has been deployed and that helps us determine how much fiber we have left to allot for new customers," explained Dave Hamilton, field project manager for Digital West. "We were never able to project our fiber quantities so easily before implementing Fiber Manager."

Schneider Electric's Fiber Manager has also provided Digital West with the ability to inventory its entire network, enabling the company to effectively manage the various aspects of its complex fiber optic grid.

"There's a lot of moving parts when it comes to managing our network," said Dyste. "When we expand our system we often have to use infrastructure that is owned by other service providers and Fiber Manager assists us in keeping track of which assets we own and which assets we lease."

By utilizing Fiber Manager's capacity analysis capability, Digital West has been able to be smarter and more proactive with network development and planning, allowing the company to manage its resources more efficiently and increasing its level of productivity.

"This tool helped us leverage our existing infrastructure by helping us manage our assets and determine where we can grow our company while incurring minimal capital costs," said Hamilton.

Another cost-saving solution is the ability for Digital West to manage its fiber optic network from a central office with improved accuracy. Prior to implementing the Schneider Electric solution, the company was required to venture into the field to take inventory of its network.

"Having the ability to plan for future expansion and search for buried assets right from my desk is incredible," said Hamilton. "I don't think we would be able to get this kind of accuracy with any other type of software. We've experienced rapid results with Schneider Electric's Fiber Manager and we look forward to the continued benefits."

Schneider Electric USA, Inc. 4701 Royal Vista Circle, Fort Collins, CO 80528   Telephone: 1-866-537-1091   Fax: 1-970-223-5577   www.schneider-electric.com/us

November 2012