

BLUEWATER TECHNOLOGY EXTENDS LIFE OF FIXED-LINE PHONE SYSTEMS BY UP TO 10 YEARS

Press release, 20 - September-07, Bluewater Systems Ltd, Christchurch, New Zealand:
Christchurch based ARM solutions provider, Bluewater Systems, has confirmed that the principality of Bhutan, nestled in the middle of the Himalayan mountain range has purchased the company's DDS-XM100 digital storage solution.

Bluewater CEO Sarosh Dubash says the company has sold its DDS-XM100 digital data storage solution to the tiny country. The DDS-XM100 units are to replace outdated magnetic tape units that have been used for over 20 years as the primary backup storage for the country's entire fixed line telephone infrastructure. The units will also provide network based remote access to all of Bhutan's telephone exchanges.

Bluewater has also received orders for DDS-XM100 units from the Philippines and Tanzania.

"Being able to update customers data storage effectively extends the life of their telephone exchanges by up to 10 years," Dubash said. "The alternative is for them to completely replace the exchanges, which would run into the millions of dollars, compounded by the difficulty of installing new technology in such a remote location. This is a valuable solution to assist Telcos in their evolution of moving from aging landline exchanges to New Generation Networks."

The low cost per unit, hardy nature of the solid state technology, plus the ease of installation, operation and low requirement for maintenance, were crucial factors in the decision by Bhutan Telecom to purchase from Bluewater.

Bhutan has a population of less than 700,000 people, spread over an area similar to the size of Switzerland, and notable for the extreme nature of much of its terrain and the difficulty of access to many of the small rural villages. The country introduced telecommunications in 1963, and has only 26,000 landline telephones, many of which have been installed since the 1990s.

To date, data back-up for Bhutan's eight local switches and 12 remote exchanges has been on the now outdated magnetic tape units, with the tapes being transported from remote areas to the central exchange by a Lama (Bhutanese monk) with some parts of the journey on foot or donkey.

The Bluewater DDS units can be networked to remove the need to transport the data physically, but also have flash memory storage that enables the data to be loaded onto tiny 1GB removable SD cards.

Originally developed for NEC to replace legacy MTU storage systems in telephone exchanges throughout New Zealand, Bluewater has further developed the DDS product to be compatible with a wider range of exchange systems including those that use SCSI, Pertec or Kennedy based Magnetic Data Storage units.

Dubash says the company has identified what they consider to be a specific market niche for the DDS-XM100 product and has had an excellent response from a diverse range of countries.

"These countries all share similar challenges, often having an aging telecommunications infrastructure, difficult physical access due to terrain or size, and a lack of financial resources, but at the same time they are under pressure to deliver modern technology including internet access to their populations.

"We see this product as being an interim solution to update their existing systems, while they make bigger decisions about how to replace their aging landline exchanges, possibly with cellular networks or other new technology that is not dependent on landlines.

"The DDS-XM100 pays for itself within 1-2 years by providing disruption free and maintenance free continuous operation. Further savings come from networking and being able to remotely control and collect billing data. "

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