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MARTENS Suite
Service Fulfillment Solutions

SASKTEL INTERNATIONAL

MICA News

SaskTel Customer Self-Serve

SaskTel customers have been demanding self-serve and SaskTel has been working hard to change their business model accordingly. SaskTel customers and SaskTel will both benefit from self-serve, making self-serve a win-win relationship! For customers, self-serve means changes and updates can be performed to suit their schedule as office hour constraints are eliminated. Another significant benefit for customers is that service costs are reduced and in some cases even eliminated. SaskTel, in turn, will achieve greater efficiency and operational savings.

Self-serve will allow SaskTel to:

- ◇ Remain competitive (our competitors offer self-serve).
- ◇ Offer services with the same touch and feel outside our traditional boundaries to our expanding markets.
- ◇ Do more with less in the face of a declining workforce.
- ◇ Remove simple, repetitive activities from the process so people can focus on more complex activities.

The importance of this strategy is evident in SaskTel's long term roadmap:

- ◇ Phase 1: Set up the infrastructure for IT, Network, Process and Governance.
- ◇ Phase 2: Use the infrastructure to launch new products and services, improve process efficiencies, and gain organizational alignment.
- ◇ Phase 3: Self-serve is inherent to our business model and corporate culture.

Preparation for self-serve required an extensive analysis of current activities to ensure SaskTel was not losing opportunities to maintain customer relationships. Selected activities were benchmarked and a plan was put in place for the transition to customer self-serve or, in some cases, identified as an activity that could be "instant on / zero touch / low touch". As such, the removal of manual processes was essential to the success of customer self-serve.

Two of the key activities identified as "zero touch" were the provisioning and activation of SaskTel's DSL services. The changes to this process required the implementation of MARTENS Release 13.0, the building of delegates that interact with our DSL network devices, and the rolling out of new business processes. Along the way we learned many valuable lessons:

- ◇ Self-serve is a strategic, not a tactical, decision.
- ◇ Self-serve is still growing and evolving in the industry.
- ◇ Change in organizational culture requires effective transition management.
- ◇ The company must be willing to take risks and implement many "firsts".
- ◇ A simplified network architecture will reduce the complexity of implementing self-serve activities.
- ◇ Customer education and buy-in is required for initiatives to be successful.

Despite the challenges, we are off to a great start in this new and evolving service model.

Article by Candace Bligh SaskTel

Inside this issue:

SaskTel Customer Self-Serve	1
Developing Delegates for OpenSwitchGate	2
Announcing the 2008 MICA Conference	2
SaskTel International Welcomes Donna Nelson	3
Upcoming Events	3

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Developing Delegates for OpenSwitchGate

One of the unique advantages of OpenSwitchGate (OSG) is its broad support for network devices. Currently OpenSwitchGate has interfaces for 36 types of network devices ranging from Class 5 Switches to DSLAM's to routers. Many of these interfaces communicate with element management systems that manage many different models or even types of devices so the actual number of supported devices is actually much higher. In OSG vernacular we call these interfaces delegates.

Despite the large number of delegates already included in OSG, there are still network devices that are not supported and new devices being released all the time. Because of this, one of the top priorities of the OSG development team is the development of new delegates.

In its lifetime a delegate goes through three distinct phases. They are the research phase, the development phase and the maintenance phase.

Research Phase

The research phase is very important and must be completed before any development begins. The first step is getting documentation from the device vendor. The availability and quality of the documentation makes a big difference to how well and how quickly a new delegate can be produced. Another important step is arranging access to a test device. If a test device is accessible during the research phase the OSG team can verify the accuracy of the documentation and fill in any gaps with reliable information. Often we cannot get test device access during the research phase and must rely entirely on the documentation. This is possible, but

risky, and may increase the cost and delay the delivery of the delegate.

Once all the necessary documentation is obtained and, if possible, access to a test device is granted, a document called the "Requirements Document" is written. This document outlines in detail what devices the delegate will support, how it will communicate, what functions and features of the device will be manageable, the format of commands it will accept, and any assumptions that will be embodied in the delegate. The requirements document is submitted to the client requesting the delegate for approval. Sometimes several iterations are required before a client is satisfied with the requirements document.

Development Phase

Once signed approval of the requirements document is received, the OSG team starts the delegate development phase. The client can also begin building commands for the delegate in MARTENS at this point. The development phase begins with static and dynamic modeling of the delegate. The delegate code is written and an agent definition is created. As of OSG Release 5.0 development will optionally include auto-discovery formats and listeners. Configuration screens and connection scripts may need to be written as well. After each component is developed it is unit tested, and when all the components are complete, the entire delegate is thoroughly tested in an OSG test domain to ensure that it interoperates properly with the other OSG components. If access to a test device is not available during the research phase it must be available before the development can be completed.

Maintenance Phase

Once the development and system testing of the delegate is complete it is packaged and delivered to the client. The delegate now enters the maintenance phase. The first thing that happens in this phase is a test at the client site. If errors are found during the user test they are reported and tracked using the problem tracking system (PTS) by OSG support. This tracking of reported problems will continue as long as the delegate remains in use. The delegate can be modified as clients request enhancements, as new software is released for the device, and as new versions of OSG are released. Each modification will require some or all of the steps in the three phases of delegate development.

As you can see, producing an OSG delegate is a complex process. It requires the cooperation of clients and hardware vendors to be successful. Ideally, the process will begin before a new device purchase decision has been made so that time can be scheduled and the cost of the new delegate can be factored into the cost of the device.

In the future we expect to add many more delegates to the list of supported devices as more MICA members begin to activate full path voice, data, video and even wireless services. The OSG team is continuously investigating ways to make the process more efficient, cost effective and timely.

ANNOUNCING THE 2008 MICA CONFERENCE

The 2008 MICA Conference will be held in the unparalleled beauty of the Canadian Rockies!

The Conference venue is the Fairmont Banff Springs Hotel (<http://www.fairmont.com/BanffSprings>).

May 31 - June 3, 2008.

Check our website www.sasktelinternational.com and future newsletters for further information.

SaskTel International Welcomes Donna Nelson

Donna Nelson - Project Manager - SaskTel International



Donna Nelson is a Project Manager at SaskTel International, joining the team in July 2007. Donna is responsible for providing project management expertise to enable the implementation and ongoing maintenance and support of current and new technologies and initiatives at SaskTel International. In addition, Donna is responsible for supervision of the Quality Assurance Team.

Some of the projects Donna has managed on the wireless side for SaskTel include implementation of a new customer care, service activation and billing system; Interactive Voice Response (IVR) and Computer Telephony Integration (CTI), Wireless Application Protocol (Mobile Browser), and a workforce management system.

Donna has held the Project Management Professional designation since 2002. With over twenty-five years experience in the telecommunications industry, Donna has held positions in SaskTel Mobility Information Systems, Financial Systems and Human Resources, and Supplies and Services prior to joining the SI team.

Everyone at SI would like to welcome Donna to the team!

Upcoming Events

The SaskTel International sales and marketing team will be in attendance at two trade shows this fall. Derrick Duczek and Debby Boczulak will be promoting the MARTENS Suite at NECA, which will be held in San Francisco, CA on September 23 - 27, 2007. NECA (National Exchange Carrier Association) is a premiere event, and is attended by telephone companies from across the nation, including many of our clients.

On October 10 and 11, 2007, Derrick and Debby will be attending the Midwest Telecommunications Exposition, held in Fort Wayne, IN. The Midwest Telecom Expo draws attendees from a five-state mid-west region - Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Illinois, and Kentucky. The Expo is a highly praised exposition and conference. If you or your co-workers are attending either show, stop by the SI booth and say "hello"! We look forward to seeing you!

In addition, Derrick will be one of the panelists at the TM Forum Management World Americas Conference held in Dallas, Texas, from November 4-8, 2007. The panel discussion Derrick will be a part of is being held on Wednesday, November 7, and is titled "Best Practices and Avoiding 'Me Too' IPTV". Management World Americas is considered one of the leading global events for the management of information, communication, and entertainment services.

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**SaskTel International is always looking for articles and events for our newsletter.
Please let us know if you would be interested in writing an article
about your company for the *MICA NEWS*.**