

ElectraLink’s RGMA service underpins the commercial gas communications requirements of four of the UK Big Six Suppliers and their respective commercial agents. The service contributes to customers’ drive to deliver efficiency.

THE CHALLENGE

Until 2004 suppliers and agents were mandated to use the DTN and UK Link networks for their electricity and gas communications requirements. The advent of dual fuel and the introduction of competition in metering services through the Review of Gas Metering Arrangements (RGMA) meant that suppliers and agents could now make commercial decisions regarding their preferred method of interaction. Both groups sought economic and operational efficiencies from being able to send and receive gas and electricity files via one network. Customers were:

- UK Suppliers
- UK Metering agents
- UK Metering providers

THE MISSION

To help organisations achieve their business objectives (highly resilient value for money dual fuel communications) through the innovative delivery of information technology. It goes without saying that reliability of service and market interoperability were prerequisite.

THE BACKGROUND

As a prelude to RGMA “Go Live” ElectraLink engaged with the industry by holding workshops aimed at identifying customers’ technical and functional requirements for RGMA communications.

These workshops were attended by UK Suppliers and the UK’s largest metering agents.

ElectraLink had 2 months in which to define requirements, test and roll out a new service, new flows and a new file format.

This aggressive timescale would highlight ElectraLink’s core competencies in defining and agreeing multi party user requirements, expertise in interoperability and programme management.

ElectraLink concurrently delivered a service provider migration, adding complexity to the programme management role, and further demonstrating our commitment to bringing about the change desired by our customers.

THE SOLUTION

The RGMA service builds on the well known strengths of ElectraLink’s Data Transfer Service. Users assemble data for transmission and send it to the service for processing and onward delivery to other market participants.

- Routing - files are routed using data content, not email addresses or network addresses, allowing the DTS to move data more efficiently between market participants’ systems.
- Security - using encryption, digital signatures and a virtual private network, ElectraLink ensures that sensitive customer information is never compromised.
- Audit - information about every message is recorded in a central database, which market participants can query in real time so that they have up to date information about their data.
- Reliability - the system is reliable by design, as proven by consistently exceeding service levels.
- Delivery acknowledgements - all messages are automatically acknowledged so the sender knows unequivocally the status. of their data.
- Resilience – allows for service-wide and customer-specific disaster recovery facilities as well as being supported 24/7.
- Tools – a number of high value tools are provided which allow customers to manage their data.

“Looking back it was a challenging but very rewarding assignment. Defining customer requirements, updating our core network whilst in the middle of a service provider migration exercise so that our customers would be able to send and/or receive gas files alongside their respective electricity files in such a short timeframe was no mean feat.”

Neil McKeown, ElectraLink’s RGMA Project Manager

RESULT

Introduced in 2004, our service now underpins the commercial gas communications requirements of four of the UK Big Six Suppliers and their respective commercial agents.

The ability to transfer the gas industry's csv based files has meant synergies for our customers (Suppliers and agents) from being able to send and receive gas and electricity files via one network.

ElectraLink's gas metering services underpin around 75% of MPRN's within the gas metering market.

These services enjoy all the benefits of the most modern networking technologies and services, including web based services.

Utilities are under constant pressure to deliver efficiencies into their business and the introduction of our RGMA service has helped our customers achieve their goals.

ElectraLink has built a team of utility sector experts that bring deep rooted experience of the electricity business, IT, business and technology consulting.

We are now investing in our consulting capability to provide additional value and expertise to our customers and partners.

ABOUT ELECTRALINK

ElectraLink is the UK energy industry's information and code governance specialist, having been the provider of the electricity data network since it was established for that purpose in preparation for market deregulation in 1997.

We provide a unique range of services to utility market participants and have consistently achieved the highest customer satisfaction ratings. Electralink is well placed to provide services in support of ongoing business process improvement initiatives particularly where these support industry-wide change.

ElectraLink is proud of its reputation in the energy market for providing high quality, cost effective services and solutions to meet the needs of our clients.



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