ORS manages TV and radio broadcast and programme infrastructure using iET ITSM – "positive spin-off" provided by ITIL®

ORS (Austrian Broadcasting Services), the subsidiary of ORF (Austrian Broadcasting Corporation), is responsible for almost all TV and radio programme providers in Austria, as well as for digital television. iET ITSM has helped centralize the provision of technical information as part of monitoring and maintaining the organisation's transmitters.

The management of ORS's technical infrastructure was decentralized in early 2012. ORS launched the TIS (Ticket and Infrastructure System) project with the aim of making data about the broadcast infrastructure more accessible and transparent to all ORS staff and of improving the quality of documentation.

Ticket and Infrastructure System (TIS)

ORS had the following objectives with the TIS project:

Site Management

- Displaying all ORS-relevant site information and technical equipment (e.g. antennae, transmitters, masts etc.)

Transmitter Database

- Frequency and transmitter planning, history
- Incident management
- Detecting faults and outages

Change Management

- Recording and scheduling maintenance work at the transmitter stations
- Scheduling extensions and renovations via the planning departments

Implementing the TIS based on a standard ITSM solution

ORS decided to implement the TIS based on a standard solution for IT service management. They opted for the iET ITSM solution, which was implemented by Softpoint IT-Solutions, the iET Solutions partner in Austria.

"Softpoint IT-Solutions had the best understanding of the industry-specific requirements of all our providers and presented practical approaches for implementation using iET ITSM," explains Norbert Grill, ORS Managing Director.

"This project involved us having to adapt a solution that was primarily designed to be used within the IT function to handle the infrastructure and terminology used by radio and TV programme providers. The flexibility offered by iET ITSM enabled us to document and manage the infrastructure at ORS without needing to abandon the specific terminology and concepts used in broadcasting technology," adds Klaus Hörl, the project manager from Softpoint IT-Solutions.

Transferring data from the legacy systems posed a major challenge. The data stored locally had to be consolidated first.

The next step involved the import routine, which automatically created the transmitter sites, programmes, signals and masts on the system, together with the relationships between them. To ensure that the right data quality was achieved at the end of the process, a raft of tests were carried out before the data was finally imported into the TIS.

Site Management: CMDB & Configuration Management

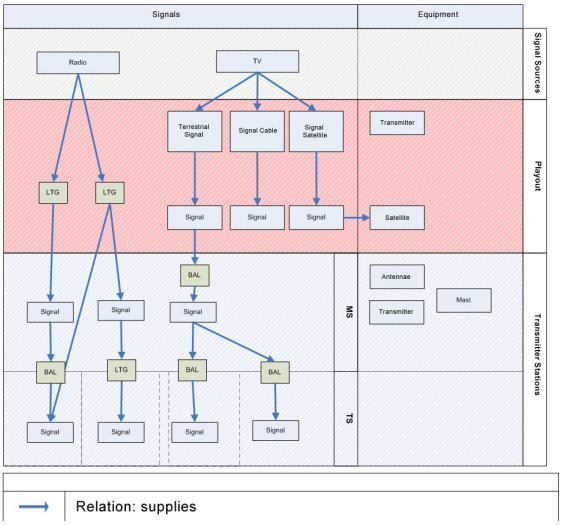
The ORS technical infrastructure comprises technical equipment (antennae, masts etc.), radio and TV programmes, as well as signals for broadcasting programmes.

KEY BENEFITS

- Centralized provision of information
- High-quality documentation
- Maximum support provided to staff in day-to-day operations
- Meaningful data supplied for scheduling
- Prompt notification of customers in the event of outages

THE SOLUTION AT A GLANCE

- Rapid implementation turnaround thanks to ITIL®
- Site management of technical facilities
- Transmitter database
- Incident management
- Change management
- Map application based on Open Street Map* and Google Satellite*



Representation of the ORS CMDB

This has been fully recorded in the TIS Configuration Management Database (CMDB), which currently contains around 11,000 configuration items (CIs) with "active" status. All the CIs are linked to each other via relationship management. This provides service engineers with all the data required to maintain an installation or rectify faults.

ORS also introduced "logical CIs" to be able to represent its business in the most effective way possible. All radio and TV programmes were created as logical CIs because it is often the case that a programme interruption is detected and reported before the underlying technical infrastructure is affected by faults. All programmes are linked via relationship management so that any slave transmitters potentially affected can be identified and customers informed if necessary.

CMDB map application

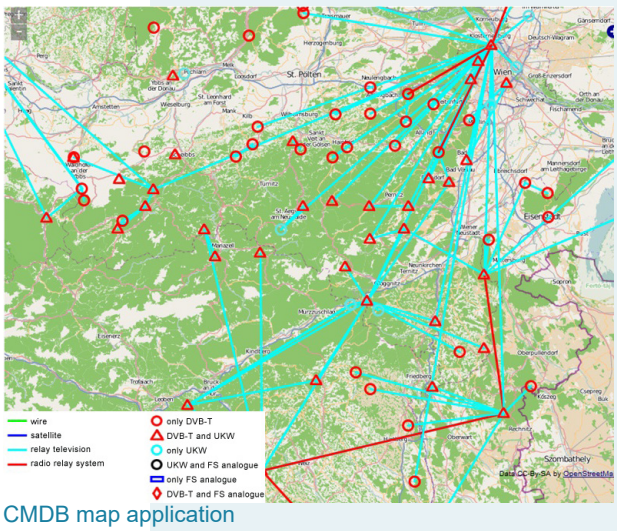
In the graphical CMDB all the CIs are displayed, together with their links to each other. Softpoint IT-Solutions added a digital map application to the graphical CMDB in cooperation with its partner, MICROLAB. This displays the links and dependencies between the individual transmitter stations. Map content from Open Street Map* and Google Satellite* provides the basis for the web-based application. The map application highlights the current fault status throughout the transmission area and also provides information for use in planning the network's expansion. Engineers can display the transmitter stations' locations so that, for example, they can plan their journeys. This is helpful as transmitters are often located in high altitude locations that are difficult to access. The ORS management team uses the map view to obtain a quick overview. If necessary, more in-depth data can be accessed by drilling down.

Transmitter Database: History Management

Only active signals for broadcasting programmes are recorded in the CMDB as CIs (signal CIs). All inactive or planned signal CIs are managed in the transmitter database (TDB). This manages the complete lifecycle of a signal, including all information about the site, antenna system, technical attributes, official authorizations etc. for each coordination date. The TDB currently holds approx. 70,000 records featuring past and scheduled activities.

The transmitter database was redeveloped by Softpoint IT-Solutions as part of the TIS project and is based on the iET Developer Studio from iET Solutions. Softpoint IT-Solutions was also involved in optimizing the TDB, adding a reporting module to it, as well as a feature for representing and converting technical data (decibels, decibel watts, watts, kilowatts etc.), and implementing an interface for the CMDB.

Data synchronization takes place between the TDB and CMDB as soon as a scheduled programme starts running. The person responsible for scheduling initiates synchronization manually and the subsequent process runs completely automatically.



CMDB map application

ABOUT THE ORS GROUP

The ORS Group consists of Austrian Broadcasting Services GmbH & Co KG (ORS) and its subsidiary ORS comm GmbH & Co KG (ORS comm). ORS was formed in early 2005 from the Broadcast Engineering division of ORF (Austrian Broadcasting Corporation) and is 60 % owned by ORF and 40 % owned by Medicur Sendeanlagen GmbH, which is part of the Raiffeisen Group. ORS comm is 100 % owned by ORS and provides technical services for broadcasting audiovisual media services and online services via external organisations.

The ORS Group is responsible for developing and operating the technical infrastructure for Digital Video Broadcasting – Terrestrial (DVB-T) in Austria. As the leading analogue and digital broadcaster in Austria, the ORS Group operates an extensive network of transmitters to service its customers, located at almost 450 sites. The ORS Group also provides technical services supporting digital satellite television. ORS and ORS comm include leading companies among their customer base from the following sectors: television (e.g. ORF, ATV, PULS 4, ServusTV, goTV, Austria 9 TV), radio (e.g. Ö1, Ö2, Ö3, Kronehit Radio, Lounge FM), mobile telephony (e.g. A1, Orange, tele.ring) and energy (e.g. EVN).

www.ors.at

Incident Management

The process of detecting faults in transmitter stations and programmes is carried out either manually by staff or automatically via remote control devices. The remote control devices are tools used to monitor transmission devices, and also every device connected to them. If a remote control device reports a fault, such as a network outage or signal fault, the incident is verified by a member of staff and, if necessary, automatically recorded as an incident in the TIS by clicking on it.

Thanks to an impact analysis designed specifically for ORS, it is possible to determine the impact of a fault across the whole of Austria, verify backup scenarios and adopt suitable measures. The impact analysis is based on the radio and TV programmes recorded in the CMDB and their relationships.

Dynamic email management facility identifies - via the impact analysis - the sites and relevant contacts affected by a fault, as well as their subsidiary sites. This means that notifications and warnings can be sent, if required. Templates, logos, text modules etc. are included in the dynamic mail tree structure. However, an email is only sent after being authorized by a member of staff.

ORS downloads all the incident and change information to a data warehouse once a day, where the fault times and downtimes are processed and can be used for availability analysis.

Change Management

Change Management is used to schedule and document maintenance and assembly operations carried out at the transmitter stations. The multi-stage authorization process which is part of iET ITSM helps ORS comply with documentation guidelines.

ORS carries out regular routine maintenance activities. These changes are recorded once with their frequency (e.g. every month, six months, year etc.).
iET ITSM then automatically generates a new change in the system for the next deadline due. This ensures that maintenance is carried out at the appropriate time.

Project implemented faster using ITIL®

In spite of the stringent requirements, the ORS project team and Softpoint IT-Solutions successfully implemented the project within a year. The TIS went into operation in June 2012. In the course of the project, ITIL® (IT Infrastructure Library) was valued as a “positive spin-off”.

ABOUT SOFTPOINT IT-SOLUTIONS

Softpoint is an Austrian solution partner of leading software companies in the field of (IT) service management and infrastructure. For our team of 30 specialists partnership and competent support are an integral part of our company culture.

Since 1999 we offer professional consulting for the implementation of ITIL® processes and IT Service automation tools in Austria and neighbouring countries. Our ITSM automation platforms facilitate IT service processes as well as non-IT processes in an easy to configure application. Subsequently the platforms can be put into operation in less time and most cost effective.

High efficiency and a short implementation phase result in a quick and sustainable project success.

www.softpoint-its.at

ABOUT iET SOLUTIONS

iET Solutions, a division of UNICOM® Global, helps large and midsize enterprises to increase the efficiency and security of their IT operations and infrastructure. Organizations around the world use software from iET Solutions for IT service management (ITSM), software asset management (SAM) and enterprise service management (ESM). The company has more than three decades of experience in service management and works with organizations across all industry sectors.

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