

RAIL SETTLEMENT PLAN LTD.

In Brief

The UK rail industry's need for a secure, reliable network to support a national passenger reservation system that facilitates 120 million inquiries and 40 million transactions annually.

Solution

Deploy a secure, scalable, IP VPN to connect the industry-wide national reservation system and support the transaction needs of 25 train operating companies and many associated business partners.

Results

A managed IP VPN solution that securely transports the business critical transactions of the national passenger reservation system and provides the flexibility and scalability to meet the evolving requirements of the reservation system over the next decade.

Global Crossing became the first telecom provider to link all train operating companies and their business partners over a single, seamless IP VPN platform.

Details

Rail Settlement Plan Ltd. (RSP) is part of ATOC, the Association of Train Operating Companies, an umbrella organisation set up by the UK Train Operating Companies. RSP has responsibility for the operation of the fare systems and ticket types offered by the train operators, and oversees £4 billion in annual rail fares in a revenue-sharing system between participating operators. The National Reservations Service (NRS), which operates under the RSP, processes an estimated 120 million inquiries and 40 million transactions a year.

Challenge

Millions of passengers rely on the rail reservation system each year, a number that has increased steadily in recent years with the introduction of bargain fares that require reservations, and the advent of Internet reselling. RSP needed to update its existing computerised reservation system to meet this increased demand and to improve the overall efficiency of the reservation service. To achieve this, they needed a flexible, scalable network that could support the updated reservation system as well as future requirements. Reliability and security were also essential requirements to the efficient operation of the system application and the network that supports it

RSP selected Global Crossing to provide an industry-wide managed IP VPN service to support the NRS following an open competition through OJEC, the Official Journal of the European Communities. Global Crossing's experience as a provider of managed voice and data services to the UK rail sector, as well as their knowledge in designing, implementing, and managing complex managed networking solutions, put them in the position to meet RSP's requirements.

The IP VPN is integrated with Global Crossing's existing rail telecoms infrastructure and protocols, and provides network reliability, continuity and security for the industry at large.

Global Crossing's managed IP VPN service provides RSP with a platform to link all train operating companies, including business partners, on one single secure network. The IP VPN links more than 40 sites to a data centre in Bristol, where the NRS is hosted. And, with more than 9,000 km of UK network structured around the railway, most rail companies are within close proximity to a Global Crossing point of presence (PoP). The extensive reach of this network provided a rapid deployment to meet project timescales with minimal disruption and met RSP's criteria for a "value for money" service. Global Crossing became the first telecom provider to link all train operating companies and their business partners over a single, seamless IP VPN platform.

RSP's managed IP VPN solution has the flexibility and scalability to meet their evolving requirements over the next decade.

"We have worked closely with Global Crossing to implement the new IP VPN, and it is effectively live now. Global Crossing has shown flexibility in meeting changes in our requirements and we look forward to working with them as a key partner going forward." said Steve Pickman, National Reservations Service Programme Manager.