



EXPERT OPINION :

# Why expert testing equals good customer experience



James Munro, business development manager from Telcordia, argues that CSPs must address their testing capabilities now in order to compete in today's challenging environment.

Communication services providers (CSPs) are at a crossroads with their customers. Today, with triple-play and quad-play services they have the opportunity to boost their brand, differentiate their offering and drive revenue. To do this, the services must be targeted and provide value to their customer so that they will pay for them. Customer expectation means that CSPs have to get this right the first time. As such the need for quick, accurate and sound testing becomes even more critical.

Heightened competition among CSPs coupled with new media companies such as **Google**, **Facebook** and **Yahoo!** that are diversifying and providing traditional telecom services, are changing the communications playing field worldwide. CSPs are responding to increased competition by varying and expanding their service offerings and providing richer service bundles such as mobile instant messaging, social networking and location based services, at a faster rate than ever before seen.

With the drive to provide these services to the market quickly, comes the balancing act of doing so without sacrificing quality while keeping abreast on the cost to deploy and the total cost of ownership to the CSP. Even when CSPs deliver such services on a converged IP-based infrastructure, the complexity involved is significantly higher than it was in the days of basic telecom voice and data services, and this complexity is translating into higher than expected OpEx.

CSPs that are trying to capitalise on their investment and reduce the cost to deliver new services to the market faster are looking to their testing system to provide part of the answer. **Telcordia** is seeing CSPs move away from their in-house testing systems to instead utilise a system that can be easily reconfigured every time there are developments in new technology; that keeps pace with the requirements of next generation services and that will reduce the cost of configuration.

Manual network tests and single-vendor systems can no longer provide what CSPs need. They're simply too expensive, time-consuming and error-prone for next generation networks and services.

Ultimately, CSPs are looking to more flexible and configurable testing solutions to significantly decrease the time to market for new services, provide enhanced customer service and reduce the churn that is usually associated with poor service quality.

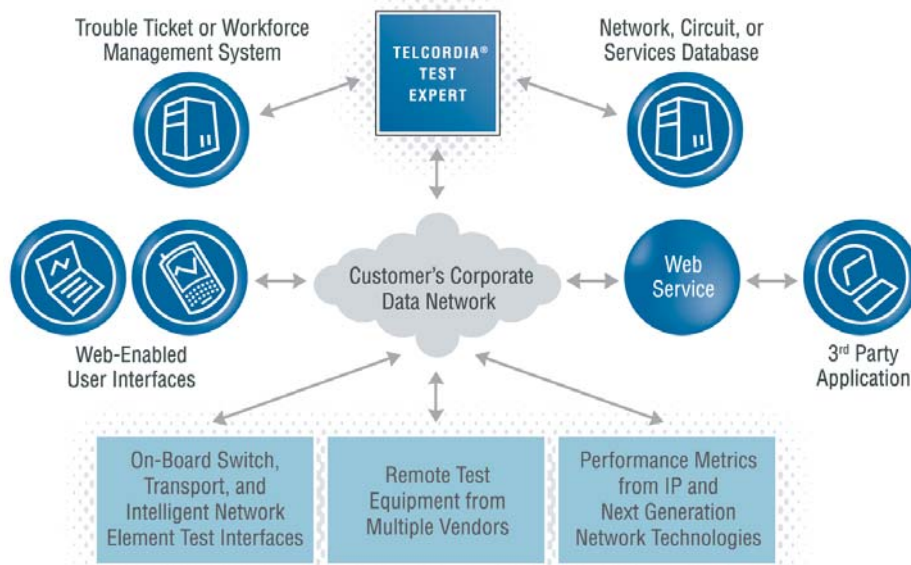
### Automating the expertise

Now, CSPs can look to commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) testing solutions as a viable option to their in-house solution. All-in-one testing solutions for next-generation networks and services, such as **Telcordia® Test Expert**, span legacy to next generation services. The result is a system that delivers automated testing to support trouble ticket resolution and service assurance, and facilitates customisable, interactive testing to enhance the productivity of in-house testing personnel.

CSPs are already reaping significant competitive advantages from testing systems like this because the automated, flow-through testing is performed with the quality and accuracy of the CSP's own best human testing experts. It is estimated that human resource testing time can be reduced by approximately 30%, even when flow-through levels are at a modest 50%, and that equates to significant

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Jargon Buster:**

OpEx:  
Operational  
Expenditure



cost savings that can be leveraged elsewhere in the organisation. The cost benefits for CSPs are very real. For one particular US tier 1 Telcordia CSP customer, the benefits of deploying an automated test system equates to savings of more than US\$100 million a year.

Telcordia's emphasis on reducing the cost of COTS products for CSPs mean that solutions, such as Telcordia® Test Expert, are quick and easy to implement and CSPs have the flexibility and customisation of a solution, but at a fraction of the price – resulting in more satisfied customers, increased revenue and a critical competitive differentiator. COTS also ensures that it is standards-based and vendor-neutral, delivered via a service-oriented architecture (SOA), and has the modern interfaces such as XML and web services.

Crucially, the power to deploy new services is finally handed to the service product managers. Through sophisticated testing solutions the service product managers have the ability to develop new testing technologies without the aid of the vendor. This allows cost-effective and timely roll out of new services including their testing and service assurance. Service product managers now can dictate and meet the roll-out date of new services, rather than wait for the testing system to be in place in order to deploy the new service. Or worse still, run the risk of jeopardising a CSP's reputation by launching the service without a comprehensive service assurance testing system in place.

Where previously, for some CSPs, the cycle time for legacy test systems was 12 months or

more, CSPs now have a significantly reduced time to market of new next generation services, opening opportunities for CSPs to talk to their customers more frequently with a quality value-add proposition. The risk of losing customer market share and revenue is all the more tangible for CSPs that lag behind the competition because their insufficient testing approaches do not address today's needs.

#### Testing the bottom line

To stand out from the crowd, Telcordia has seen CSPs use content as the key differentiator. But their ability to do so rests on a strong balance sheet and the premium content that it can secure. So, pushing down the cost base of delivering services becomes more important as it increases the flexibility and financial power that a CSP has to bundle the best content and stay ahead of its competitors. In this context, a test system that actively reduces the cost of delivering services is not only one that contributes to profitability but also one that can be deployed as an effective tool to differentiate through rapid service creation and delivery.

As CSPs strive to survive in a dynamic, competitive market, they need to provide new services to the market quickly, while ensuring that service delivery and service performance are at their optimum. By testing services accurately and cost-effectively, CSPs can maximise cost savings on existing services. CSPs now have the opportunity to put a stake in the ground in a highly competitive market by having the ability to invest in delivering richer services such as premium content – and having the testing infrastructure in place to ensure that it performs.

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