

ROI SHOWCASE

BC Hydro

ITRON CASE STUDY

BC Hydro

Headquarters: British Columbia, Canada

Line of Business: Utility

Expanding Automation

For the past 15 years, BC Hydro has used wireless dispatch for fieldwork orders. Yet it became clear in the late 1990s that the utility's legacy wireless dispatch system was reaching its limits. It could not continue to grow as the utility expanded, nor did it provide the functionality and flexibility needed in the field.

One of the largest electric utilities in Canada, BC Hydro serves more than 1.6 million customers. As BC Hydro's service area and number of customers expanded, so did its need for a dispatch system that worked in real-time, supported a paperless work order environment and simplified field management to a single source. BC Hydro officials also needed a flexible solution.

"The cost to upgrade the existing system was more expensive than a new Service-Link implementation," said Ivor Block, BC Hydro's Manager for Business and Information Services. BC Hydro leaders turned to Itron's Service-Link in 2000. The system had low maintenance and implementation costs, tighter integration to the utility's storm management system and a higher degree of user flexibility, all with a Web-based architecture and off-the-shelf simplicity.

The browser-based architecture of Service-Link enabled BC Hydro to easily implement the system to its remote dispatch centers. Dispatchers and supervisors were able to view,



evaluate and record the history of work orders and workers in the field—a "one-view" version for the utility.

BC Hydro initially deployed a Service-Link pilot program while maintaining its previous dispatch system. "Service-Link exceeded expectations," said Block, and the older program was

shut off. "We moved from a pilot program to a full-scale roll out, and recently expanded to 100 users. Now we're looking at other applications for Service-Link, and BC Hydro is right there with us," said Russ Vanos, VP of Itron's Energy Market Group.

Since the implementation of Service-Link, BC Hydro has maintained a paperless work order cycle and better fleet management. In the near future, BC Hydro will have integrated GPS functionality, which will reduce the time to restore power by dispatching appropriately skilled resources closest to the trouble location.



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