

THUS wins £3 million contract to supply GWR with industry leading IP network

April 5, 2004 - THUS plc announced today that it has won a £3 million contract to provide radio broadcaster GWR Group with a national Internet Protocol (IP) network. The contract is expected to run over five years.

The investment will see GWR, which owns Classic FM as well as more than 30 local FM stations across the country, become the first radio broadcaster in the UK to commercially broadcast live audio over THUS's highly advanced network using technology known as MPLS (multi-protocol label switching). This makes it the UK's most technologically advanced radio broadcaster, with the ability to send live broadcasts to a few, several, or all its sites simultaneously

GWR sites nationwide will now be able to share broadcast content, for example celebrity interviews or major concerts, cheaply and efficiently while making maximum use of its network bandwidth.

Forming the backbone of GWR's operation, the 31-site network will carry 'traditional' applications such as e-mail, Internet and file transfer as well as broadcast traffic. It consolidates all traffic from three existing networks (Data, Voice & Broadcast) to one new central network, simplifying management and reducing costs.

Phil Male, Chief Operating Officer, THUS plc said: "The network we are providing to GWR is a truly innovative application of a sophisticated networking technology, and we believe, one in a long line of UK firsts for THUS. Using MPLS (Multi Protocol Label Switching) technology puts GWR at the forefront of communications technology for the broadcast industry. MPLS delivers such benefits for broadcasters that we believe GWR is a trailblazer for its sector."

Vincent Bourne, Infrastructure Manager at GWR added: "The delivery of the THUS network is the realisation of our long-held vision for the impact that a modern data network can bring to the radio business. It gives us the capability to broadcast live from any site to any site at the drop of a hat. The shared nature of the network means costs are driven down by the removal of our previous Voice and Satellite networks - it's simply not possible to design a more elegant and cost effective way of delivering the services. This is the way all broadcasters will be going with their services in the future, no question.

Bourne continued: "Through our alliance with THUS, GWR is way ahead of the wave. The selection process for a supplier for this project took the best part of a year, we chose THUS because they "got" the vision, and were prepared to work in an extremely innovative and collaborative way with us to deliver the network we needed. We found THUS to have an excellent understanding of the media sector as well as the technology we use. This is another technology first for GWR Group, which was the first broadcaster to switch to an entirely CD-based output, the first to introduce all-digital studios to a national radio station in Classic FM, and the first to back DAB Digital Radio broadcasting"