## Telecommunication Billing Solutions

Getting a customized billing solution has always been a reason for major headache for Telco companies. With various off the self packages in the market it became more difficult for the user to choose the right one. More over due to the complexity of the topic, off the self solutions has always been rather rigid in their design.

So after research for several years Swastik Infotech has now emerged with a flexible (without compromising on the quality) solution. Initially the product has been exposed to the US market, and its huge success and response has given the company the boost, to develop billing solution as its niche.

With vast experience in data and document management, and exposure to call accounting packages, application software development and help desk application development, the company is now eyeing in the domestic market too.

E-Biller
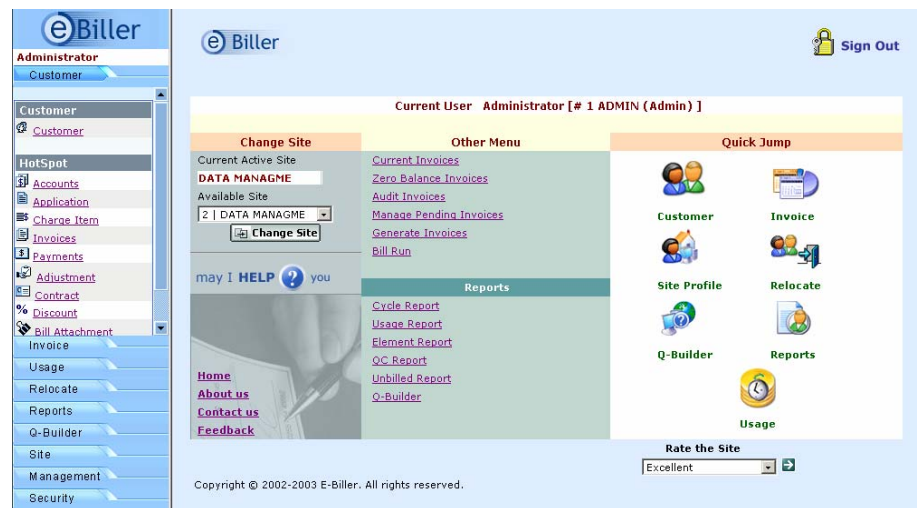
E-Biller is a fast, powerful and accurate web based billing solution. Its scalability and flexibility will provide telecom operators to remain competitive without additional overhead of software complexity. It is designed for change and growth.

E-Biller application allows telecom operators with versatility required by the organization to rapidly configure, implement new services, offers, ratings and schemes. It is a comprehensive package where the operator will get all the facilities under one roof.

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Hierarchy Management

The system is well balanced between two very well defined but, still interrelated hierarchies, which are:

1. Site Product Service Hierarchy

    This section is responsible for maintaining the site portfolio for the operator to project their services, products on offer. This section is operator defined to help in proper categorization of their products and services. The Site Hierarchy can be used for several purposes, which include:-
    a. Allows adding multiple services or new service.
    b. Allows adding multiple products on offer or new offer.
    c. Creating customized site to manage valuable customer needs.
    d. Help organization to categorize their business work flow.
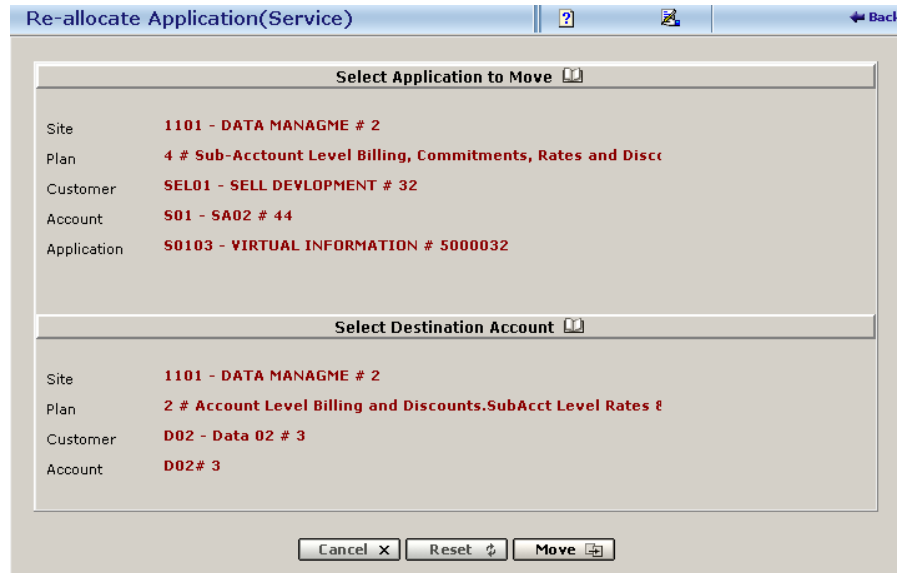
2. Customer Hierarchy
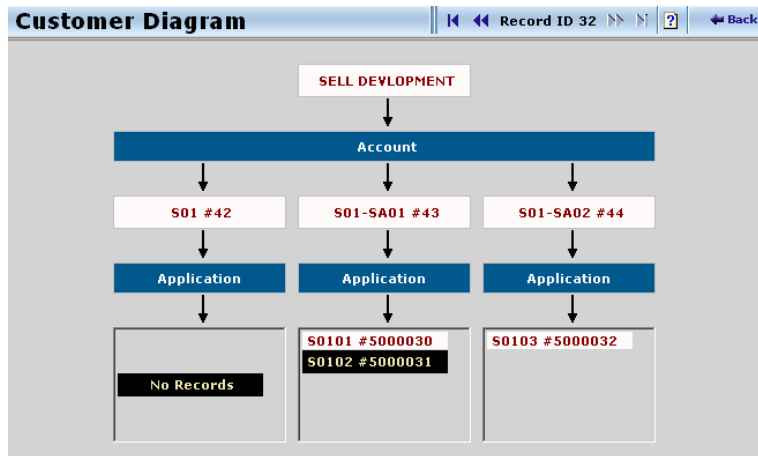
E-Biller is able to record the customer's hierarchy. The system supports complex hierarchies up to 4 (Four) levels.

The customer hierarchy can be used for several purposes, which include: -

1. Assigning plans to support different levels of the hierarchy
2. Providing usage rating, customer commitment (MRC) and discounts at different level of hierarchy, or composites to cover the whole organization
3. Defining who is responsible for paying the account
4. Reflecting the customer's organization within the customer master, to assist in providing analyzed information for the customer's use
5. Assisting the service provided with a total picture of a customer's organization, to assist sales and marketing to the customer

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Re-allocation

When operators forecast that a customer or even a group of customers are likely to churn, they will need to address the problem immediately. The ability to move customers on to an alternative plan that is not only attractive to them but also profitable for the operator is of prime importance.

The E-Biller reallocation section and plan management, allows operators to rapidly change tariffs and adjust periods (such as off peak, low peak, etc.), in order to create more appropriate plans (particularly useful for the retention of corporate clients).

These has been broadly categorized in these sections:

1. Plan Management – It allows operators to create plan dynamically as suited to its requirements.

2. Plan Reallocation – It allows operators to assign a customer to more appropriate plans which they opt for.

3. Site Re-allocation – It allows operators to assign a customer to different site to allow him to track the valued customers more specifically.

4. Service (Account/Application) Re-allocation – It allows operators to assign a customer particular Service at Account level or lower level to provide him better variations.

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Charges

The system has a vast charge portfolio for the operator to choose from and capable of handling various type of charges and are categorized in these sections:

1. Usage based charges - These are charges incurred to the subscriber/customer for their usage for a particular billing cycle.

2. Non-Usage Charges

This has been broadly categorized in these sections:

1. One Time Charge
2. Monthly Recurring Charge
3. Annual Recurring Charge
4. Equipment Charge

These charges are further categorized to provide operator with different variations in these types:

1. Ability to assign individual charges as prepaid charge or postpaid charge
2. Ability to assign charges at Charge Element level or at charge sub-element level
3. Ability to back bill charges
4. Ability to disconnect charges
5. Ability to nullify charges
6. Ability to prorate charges correctly

3. Commitment Charges – These are charges incurred when a particular customer fails to retire its MRC (Minimum revenue commitment).

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Usage Rates

E-Biller provides operators with another invaluable tool to supports various user definable Usage Rate plans for individual Usage elements. It also presents Billed CDR's grouped according to the type and provides users with the facility to review individual CDR's of the same type.

In E-Biller, Usage Rating may be defined at various levels of the customer hierarchy, or composites to cover the whole customer organization, or globally applied to all Subscribers, over the entire system, including:

1. Rating schemes for individual Usage Elements
2. Volume or batch based Tiered Usage Rating
3. Time based Tiered Usage Rating
4. Call based Rating, Minute based Rating, Both based Rating

Usages Correction

With E-Biller, erroneous CDR's (Call Data Record) enter into Usage Correction management process and are transmitted on the web for corrective action.

- In E-Biller erroneous CDR's are grouped according to the type, to allow single action from the user in order to correct all erroneous CDR's of the same type.

- E-Biller provides back-out of CDR's from Customer Usages, to allow user to correct the Customer Rating plans, to re-process the Backed out CDR's with new Rating plans.

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Discounts

In E-Biller, discounts may be defined at various levels of the customer hierarchy, or composites to cover the whole customer organization, or globally applied to all Subscribers, over the entire system.

Discounts are defined using the Discounts GUI, and then applied during the Billing.

The E-Biller supports various user definable discount plans, including:
- Revenue and volume discount
- Percentage and dollar discount
- Stepped (incremental) and tiered volume discount
- Call volume based, Minute volume based discount
- Discounts on recurrent charges

Using E-Biller operator can define multiple discount plans for single customer organization and it also allow operator to set discount for single charge element or group of charge elements.

Commitment

In E-Biller, commitment (MRC) may be defined at various levels of the customer hierarchy, or composites to cover the whole organization, or globally applied to all charges and Subscribers, over the entire system.

Commitments (MRC) are defined using the Contracts GUI, and then applied during the Billing.

The E-Biller supports various user definable Contracts plans, including:

1. Introductory commitments – This applies at the time of introducing the customer, and works only once for the customer.

2. Established commitments – This applies to the continuous commitment of the customer and it also has ability to auto renewal.

Other multiple variations has been provided to the system to enable operator to create flexible commitment plans for the customer, which are namely:
- Define multiple contract plans for single customer organization.
- Define commitment for single charge element or group of charge elements.
- Define commitments on monthly basis or any multiple of months.

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Billing Level

E-Biller provide various level of billing and are categorized in these sections:
1. Account Level Billing – E-Biller allows operators to assign multiple accounts under same customers. In this level all accounts specific to the customer organization will receive individual invoices.

2. Account with Sub-Account Level Billing – In this level E-Biller allows operator to create multiple accounts having multiple sub-accounts under same customer. In this level invoices can be generated at customer account level or customer sub-account level.

3. Account/Sub-Account having Applications Level Billing – This level is further expansion of previous level where operators are allowed to assign multiple applications under account and sub-account under same customer. In this level invoices can be generated at customer account level or customer sub-account level.

4. Application Level Billing – In this level the setup is same as previous level but invoices are generated at application level for the customer.

Plan Management

E-Biller Plan management section consists of collection of descriptions and definitions that control how to bill a customer, otherwise known as "Rating" and provides an invaluable marketing tool for the operator. This includes various category items which are namely:
1. Level of billing, such as Invoices at Primary customer level, Secondary customer level or Application level.
2. Tariff rules for commitment (MRC) that must be applied for the service(s)
3. Standard discounts applicable to the service(s)
4. Usage Rate definition

E-Biller Plan management section provides various range of predefined Telco's specific plan to the operator to choose from. In these plans various combination of category items are provided using that operator can choose to bill Customer organization in various ways. Separate ranges of plans are available for each billing level.

Another Hot feature of Plan management is to allow operator to create its own billing plan by placing the billing categories at it desired level.

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Payments, Adjustments and Write-Offs

Payments

The system manages customer account in a similar way that a bank account is managed, i.e. all charges, payments and the account balance are known at any given time.

The system supports deposits in advance payments, payments against invoices and partial payments. The system also keeps real time invoice balances and static invoice balances which is valuable tool for customer auditing.

Adjustments and Write-Offs

Flexible adjustments schemes are provided with various options to the operator to choose and apply proper credit to the customer organization. These are categorized in these sections:
- Current credits
- Credits against previously billed Invoices.
- Credit against previously billed individual elements.

Account Receivables

The accounts receivable application, deals with all functions related to customer payments and prior bill adjustments, including the following features:
- Real time cash processing
- Batch cash processing
- Review of receivable status

In addition, E-Biller supports the capability for the operators to access Real time invoice balances, static invoice balances (balances just after billing). These tools support operators with all the queries which customers put to them on the real time and allow them to corrective actions at the same time.

Regulatory Messages

The system offers a process to deal with non-paying customers. This is based on workflow defined on its related activities:
1. 30 day Dunning Message
2. 60 day Dunning Message
3. 90 day Dunning Message
4. 120 day Dunning Message
5. 180 day Dunning Message

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Invoice Management

E-Biller supports the capability for the operators to generate, approve or delete single or group of Invoices from the web. Further generated invoices are grouped in two categories, namely, Zero Balance invoices and Invoices which has activities. Both these categories are displayed separately over the web to provide operator assistance.

Bill Formatting

E-Biller provides the capability for the operators to access bill images over the web which is formatted in the same way as the customer's bill. Bills format are according to the operator's pre-defined format and it can be assigned to any customer at any time. Various bill formats are supported. For example:
- For residential customers
- For business customers

Bill format rules are user (Telecommunication Company's) defined and the customer's bills may be formatted for eventual web, printer or paper output.

Bill Messages

E-Biller provides the facility for the operators to write account specific or global to all bill messages over the web which is formatted over the customer's bill.

Bill Attachments

E-Biller provides the facility for the operators to write account specific bill attachments over the web which is formatted over the customer's bill.

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Audit Trail

Invoice Summary

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Billed Account   D03 # 4
Invoice   09/01/2003 # 220

Element	PEC	Description	Amount
0A - PRIOR BALANCE			
10001	NR-PRIOR	Prior Balance	$1,610.16
Sub-Total			$1,610.16
2A - RECURRING CHARGES			
12043	RC-DBAUT-UPD	Database Automated Updates	($19.60)
12042	RC-DBMAN-UPD	Database Manual Updates	($24.28)
12041	RC-DBSTORAGE	Database Storage	($28.94)
Sub-Total			($72.82)
4A - CONTRACT CHARGES			
14005	US-MON-MIN	Fulfillment of Monthly Minimum Commitment	$150.00
Sub-Total			$150.00
9L - LATEFEE			
11046	NR-LATEFEE	FOR FINANCE USE ONLY	$22.34
Sub-Total			$22.34
Grand Total			$1,709.68

Invoice Summary records

Billed Charge List

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Billed Account   S01-SA01 # 43
Element   RC-DBSTORE #12005 *Database Storage*
Cycle Date   10/01/2003

Application Bill ID	BINVCHGSTRTDT	Quantity	Unit Price	CHGPRORAT	Charge Amt
S0101 #5000030	07/01/2003 - 07/31/2003	100	$450.50	[0 Day(s) , 1 Month(s)]	$45,050.00
S0101 #5000030	08/01/2003 - 08/31/2003	100	$450.50	[0 Day(s) , 1 Month(s)]	$45,050.00
S0101 #5000030	09/01/2003 - 09/30/2003	100	$450.50	[0 Day(s) , 1 Month(s)]	$45,050.00
S0101 #5000030	10/01/2003 - 10/31/2003	100	$450.50	[0 Day(s) , 1 Month(s)]	$45,050.00
Total					$180,200.00

Drill to Individual element details records

E-Biller Invoice Management section is equipped with many useful tools for the operators, to provide the ability to answer customer's questions, which is of prime importance.

It provides audit trail facility to allows operator to invoke on line, the bill calculation module on any Invoice and traced all billed items to its root and answer three simple questions of the customers, which are:
1. What all has been billed?
2. Why it has been billed?
3. How it has been billed?

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Tax

The system provides multiple range for Tax portfolio for the operator to choose from and capable of handling various type of Taxes and are categorized in these sections:

1. Direct Tax – In this section operator can assign specific amount of Tax directly on any customer invoices.
2. Charge based Taxes – In this section operator can assign taxes against customer billable charge items. This section has been further expanded to provide the operator to bill taxes in these manners:
   a. Percentage based Taxes - Here % of charge amount is billed against customer invoices for individual billable charge items.
   b. Amount based Taxes – Here a fixed amount is billed against customer invoices for individual billable charge items.

E-Biller also provides the facility to the operator to manage the customer who has exemption status and exclude those customers from these Taxes.

USF (Universal Service Fund)

E-Biller provide a separate section for Universal Service fund which helps compensate telephone companies for providing access to services at reasonable and affordable rates throughout the country, including rural, insular and high cost areas, and to public institutions.

To achieve this goal proper setup scheme has been created where operator can assign the proper plans for individual charge items based on its services. USF plans are defined using the USF charge GUI, and then applied during the Billing. Each charge elements of customer invoices are matched and proper USF plan according to that element is applied to it. As these plans are set across the system so it provides the facility to the operator to upgrade the system with changing US policies.

E-Biller also provides the facility to the operator to manage the customer who has exemption status and exclude those customers from these charges.

About Us

Swastik Infotech Private Limited is an India based IT company. Since our inception in the year 1997, we have emerged as a global software solution provider. The company is rapidly emerging as a quality player in delivering both inshore and offshore software services. We have our expertise in billing solution, call accounting software, application software, help desk application and data and document management. Our services are marked by accelerated schedules with a high degree of time and cost predictability. We provide consultation and IT services to our clients to conceptualize and realize technology driven business solution.

Some of the key areas of focus and expertise are:

Business consulting
Billing applications outsourcing
Development of ground up billing systems
Data migration solutions

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