

Turn your
network data
into actionable
intelligence



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Big data, although a fairly new buzz word, is really an old concept that traces its roots to long-established practices and technologies. What's different is the sheer volume of data involved and the speed at which that volume needs to have analytics applied to it to generate actionable insights, writes Erik Couture, executive vice president of sales and marketing at Polystar

Actionable intelligence can truly transform an operator's business



Erik Couture: Flexible data segmentation is one of the vital building blocks of intelligent big data analytics.

Separating big data from the hype involves defining what big data means for you. Put simply, big data is a collection of very large and complex unstructured data sets originating from machines, systems or human intervention. By unstructured data, we mean that the data is not coming from a relational database. Typically, big data needs to be captured, cured, stored, searched, shared, analysed and visualised. Correlation of data from multiple sources is the key to extracting the value out of the data and ultimately making the concept of intelligent analytics a reality.

The essence of big data analytics is in the intelligence it is able to extract from the vast volume of data that organisations, especially operators, collect and hold. Therefore, establishing the right frameworks and using the right tools to extract valuable insights from the unstructured data are critical big data benefits for any operator. Visualisation of the data in a meaningful and digestible manner and its flexible segmentation are other vital building blocks of intelligent big data analytics.

Polystar has been dealing with big data for almost 20 years, long before big data was even known as a concept. With that experience, Polystar is able to effectively capture, process and analyse huge amounts of unstructured data originating from the interaction between the operator networks and devices, such as handsets or machines. Only then can operators use insights gleaned from big data analytics to enhance customer satisfaction or develop new revenue streams.

When we set out two decades ago, our motivation for handling big data was to offer operators an end-to-end solution for the purpose of network monitoring or network assurance. Today, this is as important as ever, as operators face heightened competition.

To improve their chances in the battle to retain customers and increase revenues, operators are now starting to apply big data, looking outwards beyond internal applications to enable a wide and exciting range of new opportunities. The ability to deal with big data and to add value to it via advanced correlation has made Polystar a valuable source of data for other purposes that extend far beyond network monitoring.

In addition to network monitoring data, knowledge of signalling is a determining factor in order for operators to sustain their competitive edge. Understanding of the insights that can be extracted from the operator's signalling data is important because

the market is moving towards a new signalling environment as it transforms to LTE. Massive volumes of signaling traffic will be generated enabling operators to gain highly personalised insights into usage of mobile data services, such as shared data plans, to give one example. There are also potential opportunities for businesses outside the operator environment to make use of this data, subject to agreements and privacy protection.

Big data analytics provides insights into established operation and helps operators to make business decisions based on facts. Network and customer insights remove the guesswork and enable operators to grow their revenue streams by delivering more tailored and relevant offers to their customers that motivate them to spend more. This actionable intelligence enables operators to deliver exceptional and personalised customer experiences and assures customer loyalty and retention.

Publishing the data and having an open system approach is a key aspect of big data analytics. Polystar divides the output of big data sources into three categories:

- Open databases, which can be accessed as needed by third party systems within the operator, avoiding duplicate storage of the same information
- xDRs (transaction Detailed Records) which can be fed to third party analytics in real time
- KPIs enabling the operator and/or third party systems to piggyback on Polystar's experience of transforming signalling events to insights. This simplifies the use and deployment of applications since data is already correlated and enriched.

Yet another business challenge that big data brings with it is the alignment of the operator's organisation. Big data users exist within engineering, operations, customer care, roaming, sales, marketing and product management. The right tools are essential, as they transform the unstructured data into structured data to meet the needs of the majority of the departments within the operator. Polystar has its own intelligent Customer and Network Insight solutions that help operators analyse and visualise this data.

By capturing value out of the network data and unlocking insights that were previously unknown, operators can address and meet critical business requirements that enable them to run their businesses effectively. All of this ultimately helps operators build differentiating factors and gain significant competitive advantage. ■