SmartID™ Success Story
SmartID Improves Customer Service and Cuts Operations Costs for a Top-Tier MSO Provider

The JDSU method for testing home coaxial networks is sweeping the industry with operations personnel enthusiastically championing it within their organizations after increased customer satisfaction and improved worker productivity. Here are a few real-life incidents from one cable operator to consider as you seek tools and processes to improve customer service and to cut operations costs.

Background — Use Case

In this system, SmartIDs were used initially to find cabling issues primarily during high-end triple-play service calls and installations to help troubleshoot dial-tone or ingress issues. These highly valued triple-play customers are quick to let the operator know when the level of service they are receiving is inadequate. As triple-play service volume increased, the need for SmartID test capability for the workforce also increased. Management noticed technicians were not called back to troubleshoot coax problems in installations that had used SmartIDs. SmartID helped technicians isolate and correct these coax issues, leading to increased customer satisfaction.

Because all technicians in this system are not equipped with SmartIDs, technicians who have them are often rerouted or called in for "tricky" or "escalated" calls. SmartIDs often helped technicians discover hidden problems and solve issues that went undetected with other equipment. Because of this success, SmartID use is now recommended for all calls in this system.

In addition to single-family residences, the operator activates or services multi-dwelling units (MDUs) including apartments, hotels, and condos, representing an average of 30 percent of their jobs. Most MDU issues were comparable to those found in single-family homes and required similar testing. Ingress represents the most common issue encountered in MDUs and is often related to cable theft, where cables are spliced or split to feed nonpaying homes. SmartIDs help to identify and locate these issues in both single-family residences and MDUs.

Example #1: Damaged Cable

After six trouble calls in 2 months from one customer complaining of a modem randomly rebooting, the network was tested using a DSAM with a leak detector, revealing no ingress or leakage. A time-domain reflectometer (TDR) test still did not reveal any issues. However, testing with the JDSU SmartID indicated faulty house pre-wiring with 13 events occurring between the two SmartIDs. Apparently, the installer had damaged the cable while tacking it to the rafters. SmartID helps service technicians easily identify problem root causes that other tools cannot detect. This technician replaced the damaged cable which eliminated future trouble calls.
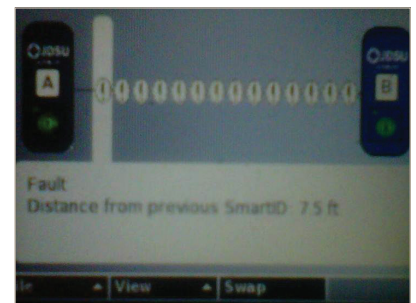
Reveals cable damaged by rafter stapling

Example #2: Tiling Issues

Issue A: A SmartID test was conducted at the home of a customer with a tiling issue that indicated cable damage confined to a specific point enabling repair without significant damage to the drywall. (The house was flat-roofed with no attic.)

Issue B: After two trouble calls, a SmartID test was conducted at the home of another customer with a similar tiling issue the test confirmed that the home network was in good working order; however, it also confirmed that the issue was with the customer-premises equipment (CPE). The CPE was replaced and the tiling disappeared.

Example #3: Intermittent Dial Tone

On the third trouble call to a customer's house with problems sending and receiving faxes and with intermittent dial tone, the technician first tested using traditional equipment and found no problems. However, a SmartID test revealed a problem at the wall plate that the technician replaced, eliminating any further trouble calls.

Example #4: Data Service Issue

On a repeat service call, a customer was upset with an aesthetically unpleasant plan to fix a data service issue by running a cable bypass around the outside of the house to repair service to an outlet on the other side of the home. The first SmartID test the technician conducted indicated a problem on the line that they were planning to bypass showing its actual location. The investigation revealed a splitter behind a blank wall plate in the basement. One of the problems was solved when the technician removed this splitter. Additional Smart ID testing revealed an old, superfluous splitter behind another wall plate. The technician removed the splitter and refitted the outlet resolving all of the home's network issues.

A quote from a field operations manager of a top-tier MSO provider: "Using SmartID, we were able to find and fix all the problems with the lines going into the home, we avoided placing a new line all around the home, and we made the customer happy with no service-issue callbacks. Use SmartIDs to avoid getting yelled at!"
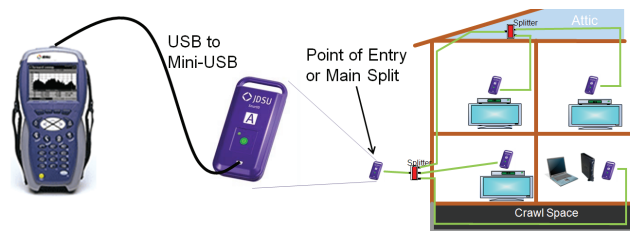
The SmartID shows every connected component, resulting in less guesswork and more-efficient problem-solving.

Summary

In light of the SmartID's impact on operations for finding previously undetectable issues, the cable system now plans to equip all their technicians with SmartIDs for verifying home network performance.

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