

ODYSSEY SOFTWARE CASE STUDY:

CloudSync

Athena™

mobile command & control



ODYSSEY SOFTWARE PRODUCT: ATHENA

- **Implementation:** CloudSync integrated Athena into its Web-based mobile device management solution. CloudSync offers mobile device management to customers on a Software-as-a-Service basis and took advantage of Athena's support for .NET and Web services to increase the functionality of its offering.
- **Customer Implementations:** 60+
- **Athena Advantage:** "Athena having certified Windows Mobile® builds was very big for us. It saved us a lot of development time. We know from experience that it's one thing to build an application, but something else to get it certified. Odyssey's Microsoft certification gave us a lot of peace of mind." *Nigel Thompson, CEO, CloudSync*



ATHENA SPEEDS CLOUDSYNC'S ENTRY INTO NEW MARKETS

In 2005, CloudSync Inc. (which operated as Soft360 at the time) had developed a browser-based mobile management solution for devices from Symbol Technologies and had built a very successful business. Its worldwide customer base included Air France, British Airways, KLM and other organizations. As the use of mobile devices in enterprises grew, so did CloudSync's business. However, the market was growing away from the company. Smartphones, PDAs and ruggedized handhelds from multiple vendors all found a permanent place in the enterprise mobile computing landscape. As the market diversified, CloudSync's support for a single vendor became a significant limitation.

Although the company could have greatly expanded its business opportunities by supporting multiple device types, there were clear obstacles to diversifying its product line. Any time the firm, headquartered in Denver, would spend redeveloping its system to support other devices would be time spent away from supporting current customers and pursuing new business.

Mobile market evolution left CloudSync with several strategic issues to consider: Could it afford to maintain its single-vendor product line? Could it afford not to? What would the development time and costs do to the company? If the company did decide to expand its offerings, should it build or buy the needed functionality?

"We had already developed a mobile device management solution, so we knew the pain points associated with doing that," said CEO Nigel Thompson. "We had a device-specific product, so our development time and costs would skyrocket for each additional device we would want to support."

OEM APPROACH PROVIDES FASTEST PATH

Thompson determined the best and fastest way to gain access to the expanded device market was to integrate device-independent, OEM mobile device management software into its Web-based console. However, he didn't expect the process to be fast because of the company's high standards for performance and functionality, and the unique architecture of its flagship software. The management system is built around a Web-based console and is provided as Software as a Service (SaaS). It remains the only SaaS mobile device management offering in the market today. The SaaS model has proven very popular with customers, but also resulted in integration requirements that many third-party OEM offerings would not be able to meet.

The company set the following requirements to guide its search for a product to integrate with its management software:

1. Native support for Web services;
2. The OEM software had to complement and leverage the legacy software and Web-based architecture, and would not have to replace what had already been developed;
3. Support for multiple device types (e.g. handheld computers, smartphones) and vendors;
4. High functionality that matched or exceeded the sophisticated device management capabilities in the legacy application;
5. Flexible terms. CloudSync offers its software in three modules that meet different requirements, and did not want to force customers into taking on features that they do not want or need.

Despite the demanding requirements, the selection process for CloudSync was simple. The first OEM product it evaluated was Athena from Odyssey Software. After testing Athena, CloudSync saw no need to seriously consider any others. After replacing the Symbol device agent it had developed with Athena, the CloudSync solution was born. With Athena integrated into its offering, on January 1, 2006, Soft360 changed its name to CloudSync and began to pursue the entire Windows marketplace.

"It's really a perfect fit. Odyssey is very strong on the device side, and we're very strong on the server side," said Thompson. "Athena comes in components, so we could license only what we cared to license. We really appreciated that, because a lot of the other packages out there come with a lot of baggage."

Athena was specifically designed for integration with other management systems and does not require its own console or server. Device management functionality is bundled into four Feature Packs — Device Provisioning, Interactive Support, Asset Reporting and Security Essentials — which can be used independently or in any combination. The entire suite is built on common protocols and standards, including Microsoft Windows® .NET and XML Web services, and includes a rich API library that makes it easy to integrate and customize. Athena can be used to support any device running the Microsoft Windows®, Windows CE and Windows Mobile® platforms, and works whether the device connects by cellular communication, wireless LAN, wired Ethernet or docking cradle. "Athena having certified Windows Mobile® builds was a critical factor for us. It saved us a lot of development time," said Thompson. "We know from experience that it's one thing to build an application, but something else to get it certified. Odyssey's Microsoft certification gave us a lot of peace of mind."

ODYSSEY SOFTWARE is a leading provider of enterprise-class device management software products for Microsoft Windows Mobile, Windows Embedded, and other Windows-based platforms. Our mission is to provide industry-leading software technologies, making it efficient and cost effective for IT organizations to manage and support the complexity of mobile enterprise deployments.



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Because Athena supports .NET, there was a straightforward integration into CloudSync's Web-based legacy system. "The fact that everything in Athena is standards based was a big plus," said Thompson. "Our developers were all very familiar with the environment, and the configuration files that Odyssey provides all make perfect sense to a developer. In addition, the APIs are very good."

CloudSync eventually did redevelop most of its console application, but by choice, not by necessity. It undertook the effort so that it could offer customers all of the powerful management capabilities that Athena provides. The Device Provision Feature Pack simplifies staging, deployment and updates, and Asset Reporting automatically discovers, identifies and catalogs all devices. The Interactive Support feature enables remote troubleshooting through wired or wireless connections and provides self-healing functions. System administrators use Security Essentials to prevent users from making configuration changes and to lock down devices that are missing or stolen to protect the data on them. Athena provides hundreds of features and reporting options, including functions specific to smartphones and other devices with voice capability. The Feature Packs also mapped well to CloudSync's legacy modules: Device Manager, Remote Help Desk and CloudControl, which manages security and user access.

"Making a Web server the primary feature for Athena is the way to go," said Thompson. "The things we do wouldn't be possible without support for Web-based services on the device side."

NEW CAPABILITIES, NEW CUSTOMERS

Athena supports all Windows®, Windows CE, and Windows Mobile®-based device platforms, including Pocket PC, Pocket PC Phone Edition, smartphone, Windows Embedded CE and Windows XP Embedded. Dozens of vendors make thousands of devices that run on these operating systems, and now CloudSync can support them all. Integrating Athena into its console has created many new opportunities for CloudSync, and the company has seen the benefits of that. More than 60 customers use CloudSync's mobile management system with embedded Athena functionality.

"The biggest value of working with Odyssey to us is our improved speed to deployment," said Thompson. "If we weren't using Athena, we wouldn't be where we are today. We'd still be developing software to match the functionality it provides and the devices it supports."



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