kapsch >>>

Mobile Number Portability – Pain or Gain?

Richard Neussl, Managing Director, Kapsch TIS, talks about the controversial issues
and technical challenges that arise when implementing Mobile Number Portability (MNP)

Richard Neussl, Managing Director, Kapsch TIS

**Richard Neussl is Managing Director of
Kapsch TIS, the Croatian subsidiary of Kapsch
CarrierCom. Kapsch CarrierCom is an independent
system integrator for fixed and mobile operators
as well as access network providers, who
specialises in network optimisation. The R&D and
competence centre of Kapsch for Mobile Number
Portability is located in Zagreb, Croatia.**

Number portability is a government-driven project. Whereas
subscribers are all for it, providers have a split opinion about
it. Some see it as a pain, others as a gain. Richard Neussl,
Managing Director of Kapsch TIS talks about the controversial
issues and technical challenges that arise when implementing
Mobile Number Portability (MNP).

**Q: What are the motives behind regulating Mobile
Number Portability?**
A: I believe that the main motive of regulatory bodies was to
reduce the significant barriers of entry for competition in the
telecom market. The fact that the subscriber needed to change
his or her telephone number when switching to a new service
provider was a huge obstacle and still is one in countries that
have not yet introduced Mobile Number Portability.

**Q: What is the burden of switching for the subscriber
in countries that have not introduced MNP yet?**
A: Many subscribers feel reluctant to change their provider
since the mobile phone number is considered to be one of the
most personal assets of a subscriber. Changing it is not just the
inconvenience of informing all the contacts, but also the risk of
not reaching somebody with this message and thus loosing this
contact.
   Especially for business users this can mean many extra costs
and troubles – from informing all the business partners, clients
and suppliers, to changing the stationery, marketing materials,
business cards, web information etc.

Q: What impact does MNP have on telecom providers?
A: The nation-wide implementation of such a service leads to an increase in customer churn due to a more intensive "fight" over the existing customers. At the same time it also lowers the average revenue per user since providers encounter higher subscriber acquisition costs. Also, attractive tariff plans usually decrease revenue.

Not to mention the internal cost associated with changes to infrastructure, impact on service and training all customer care units.

Q: We have spoken about the pain, so what is the gain for providers when introducing MNP?
A: As for the gain, it really depends on which side of the table you are on. Customer churn might be a pain for some, but for others it is a unique opportunity to attract new clients since switching becomes so much more effortless. Also, once the client decided to switch, the provider has the chance to maximize subscriber satisfaction by offering a smooth and quick transition, thus leaving the new subscriber with an excellent first impression.
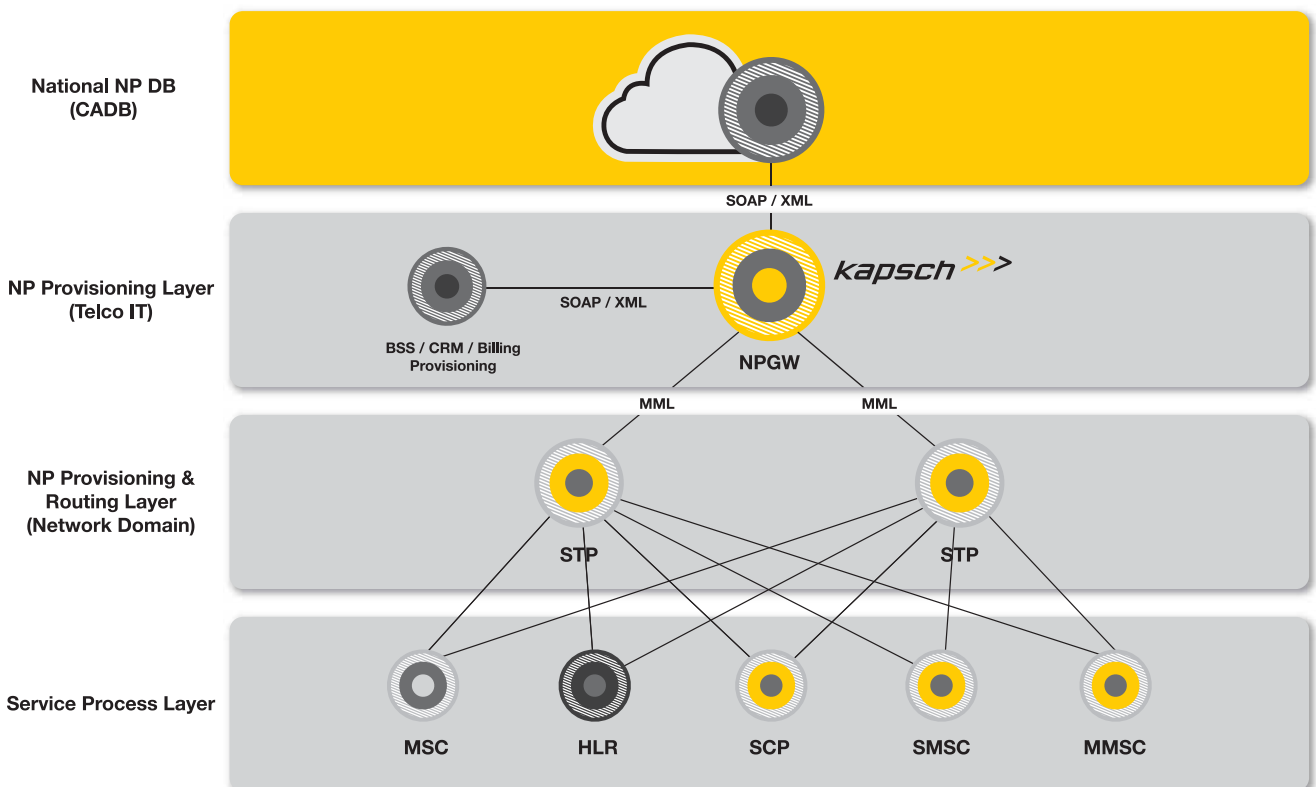
Q: And Kapsch CarrierCom makes MNP and thus excellent first impressions possible?
A: Yes, we do. Kapsch offers number portability solutions for wireless and wire lined operators taking into account the legal act of the European Union where the routing schemes, porting requests, processes, timings and integration deadlines are defined. Such solutions, tested and cost-optimized, are part of our portfolio since 2005. We also offer turn-key projects including professional services, hosting and operations as well as consulting based on several years of experience in number portability. All of this ensures a smooth and cost-effective introduction of number portability at the operator's organization.

Q: Technically, how does Kapsch CarrierCom implement MNP?
A: There are basically two different technical solutions for implementing number portability; those differ in the method of routing of calls or mobile messages. The international and most commonly used method in Europe is the use of the central database of ported numbers, also known as all-call query. This method is considered to be highly efficient and scalable as compared to the routing of calls over the network of the original provider, also known as "indirect routing", the method which makes each operator have a decentralized database and can be critical in case the donor's network ceases operations and the incoming calls get lost. In case of such decentralised solution for MNP a flexible number register can be used to manage the database of ported in/out numbers.

► **Q: So since there are two concepts of introducing MNP, which one do you go for?**

A: Really, this is not up for us to decide. It is the regulator that determines the concept. Kapsch has proven experience in delivering number portability in both types of solutions; on one hand we have implemented several projects delivering the core system and workflow for operators in the countries where the central database was not supported by the regulator; on the other hand we have delivered numerous solutions where the central database was the core of the project.

Table: Kapsch CarrierCom's Mobile Number Portability Reference Projects

Product	References
Central Database	HAKOM, Croatia RAK, Bosnia and Herzegovina Beltelekom, Belarus
Number Portability Gateway	A1 Telekom Austria, Austria Si.mobil, Slovenia Vipnet, Croatia H1 Telecom, Croatia Metronet, Croatia Vip operator, Macedonia Vip mobile, Serbia Life, Belarus MTS, Belarus Beltelekom, Belarus

Q: What made your clients choose Kapsch CarrierCom over the competitors for the implementation?

A: Our customers appreciate a high degree of flexibility ensuring seamless integration with multi-vendor environments and different network architectures of our clients.

Kapsch Network Portability Gateway (NPGW), the core component of our solution, uses industry standards to connect and integrate to external systems such as the Central Database (NPRC), STP, Billing, CRM, etc. thus meaning that our NPGW works vendor-independently.

Vast experience in the field of Number Portability and multi-vendor integration makes us a reliable partner. Also, we follow trends and offer a strong roadmap which makes providers feel that they are in safe hands.

Q: Which markets do you target with this solution?

A: We are now implementing the service in countries surrounding the European Union, such as Belarus and hopefully many more in the near future. We are also convinced that Mobile Number Portability is a hot topic in Africa and Asia in the upcoming years and are focussing on targeting these markets with our solution.

For more information visit:
www.kapschcarrier.com/croatia

Kapsch CarrierCom's OSS/BSS portfolio