



Accuracy Matters

While we are living in unprecedented times and in an environment that no longer feels safe, utilities around the world still have critical services to deliver as they keep water and energy flowing for consumers.

The global COVID-19 crisis brought new challenges for water and energy providers. With massive load shifts, redirected from industries to private homes with the spread of “stay at home” orders, and the limited capabilities for field workers to retrieve consumption data, many providers are forced to estimate energy and water consumption.

Billing has become a tedious task, culminating in a convergence of perceived unfair charges for consumers and massive cash flow discrepancies for utilities.

When it comes to billing and maximizing revenue from the service you provide, accuracy matters. Solutions exist to maintain data clarity for billing while social distancing, a limited workforce and closed homes prevent utilities from retrieving data vital for billing.

From Estimates to Actuals with Remote-Reading Technology

With more than half of the world's population living in urban areas, we can legitimately consider that a large portion of water and gas meters are located behind closed doors and difficult-to-access locations within buildings. Adding recent events and social distancing to the equation, retrieving actual consumption data is becoming nearly impossible for field agents. Although manageable in normal settings, estimations become more complicated when peaks of consumption and unexpected load shifts happen, as we've seen throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Remote-reading technologies offer a simple yet effective way to collect readings from inaccessible gas and water meters, ensuring accuracy and fair billing for all parties involved.

Collecting Data, Faster

Remote-reading communication modules allow agents in the field to retrieve data from a distance—but they also enable those agents to collect that data faster, leading to much more efficient data collection operations.

During the pandemic, half of the utilities reported a drop in their available workforce, making the effort to maintain a regular billing cycle increasingly challenging.

Remote-reading not only allows access to consumption data from inaccessible locations, but it also provides the ability to retrieve them through walk-by or drive-by systems, reducing time spent doing data collection by up to a factor of 10, with a minimal number of field agents required.

Keeping Operations Running Smoothly

In addition to data retrieval, remote-reading modules also facilitate the day-to-day maintenance of the network, helping operations run smoothly from a distance.

Featuring leak detection capabilities, these communication devices can detect unexpected consumption patterns, alerting providers of potential maintenance needs while buildings are closed and unattended.

When precisely mapping out critical hot points for field agents, utilities can prioritize field operations work and deploy agents where they are needed most—even with limited hands on deck.



ACCURACY MATTERS WHEN IT COMES TO BILLING

From the consumer's experience with an energy or water provider to the utility's cash flow, accurate data—or a lack thereof—can have a massive impact on the whole distribution chain, especially in situations such as global pandemic where routine operations have been severely limited due to national and local regulations.

With over 15 million communication devices installed in the field, Itron's Cyble technology has delivered accurate readings and maintenance insights to utilities for decades, solving today and tomorrow's challenges.



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