

Five minutes with... Kevin Biles of VirtuGrp

Helping telecommunication and utility facility owners to gain 3D visibility of their physical assets from their desktop; while working alongside teams delivering Private LTE networks for large Global enterprise customers and creating solutions for the effects increases in electric car usage has on the electricity grid are all part of an ordinary day's work for VirtuGrp ICT Infrastructure Consultant Kevin Biles.

Kevin is an ICT Infrastructure Consultant within VirtuGrp with over 30 years of telecommunications experience, and he has successfully delivered new telecommunication services across twenty-seven countries within global mobile operators and leading equipment providers. Kevin has held a senior role supporting the full end to end delivery of Radio Access Network solutions, governmental supporting roles and enterprise programs within a mobile carrier in Australia.

He is currently assisting several state government entities in their planning, build and operation of Radio Networks within Australia.



Could you explain your role at VirtuGrp?

My primary role within VirtuGrp today is advising several customers in Australia on the various Private Radio Network solutions available today and future technology roadmaps that will assist in their digital business strategies. These technologies also include the Internet of Things (IoT), which is one of the main drivers for 5G due to its latency benefits. However, IoT can happily sit inside the existing 4G if latency is not a critical part of their business requirements and is readily available in key areas of Australia today.

In addition to above, I am currently also working on an Aerial Survey Platform which allows Telecommunication and Utility facility owners to gain 3D visibility of their physical assets from their desktop. The platform offers radio and structural designers to change, add and remove radio solutions from tower assets to perform radio propagation and wind loading analysis within one tool.

What do you believe are the key elements required to lead a successful team?

I believe the key in being a good leader is to have a clear set of achievable goals across the team and celebrate the achievements as they happen and not leave it to a later time since this tends to lessen the sense of accomplishment. Be open with the team when the goals are not achieved and ask all how we can improve our ways of working which ultimately will give time back to the team members to work on the more exciting tasks.

Other leadership attributes for me are being approachable, showing empathy, giving respect to others and a simple thank you goes a long way.

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Could you give us an example of an interesting project VirtuGrp has recently been working on?

Currently the global VirtuGrp team and its partners are working on projects and solutions covering:

- ▶ Underground coverage solution support for the mining sector.
- ▶ ICT Virtualisation Implementation and Performance monitoring which allows data centres to reduce the numbers of servers needed by creating virtualised machines onto one server which decreases the environmental footprint of the data centre power and cooling requirements.
- ▶ IoT Smart Metering – Implementation of systems to monitor, control and analyse data obtained from the smart meters within the Utility industry sectors.
- ▶ Electric Car Charging – Electrical Distribution Grid IoT Monitoring solutions to reduce overload situations caused by the increase of car charging stations on the electrical grid.
- ▶ Fibre Asset Database – Assisting Fibre Network providers and its customers in the end to end design, deployment and management of fibre rollout programs.

Where do you see the telecommunications industry heading? What type of goals do you think they will be focusing on achieving in the coming years?

One of the challenges for all operators today is keeping ahead of the emerging device technologies since the device manufacturers tend to be the driving force rather than the operators in recent times. This has put increased pressure on the operators to find solutions that are not only cost-effective but also have a rapid to deployment model. The emerging 5G mmWave technology which has gained government approvals to commence trials in Australia will deliver faster speeds, lower latencies and greater capacities than that of the existing technologies. Due to the shorter coverage footprint of the technology, there will be a requirement to deliver more radio assets typically residing on existing road poles (utility, lighting etc.) by the operators which then puts increased pressure on the pole owners to work with the operators in delivering the coverage to its end customers.

Can you tell us how collaboration assists to achieve these types of goals for your clients?

Based on the previous question, I believe there will be a requirement for the operators to have a closer working relationship when it comes to sharing of assets especially when there is a limited supply of existing pole assets within the metro areas. This also applies to regional deployments of mobile infrastructure where mobile coverage is poor or non-existent. In these circumstances the radio infrastructure is not the only challenge to deploy as the supporting infrastructure such as power and transport back to the core network becomes costly to the point where it is not a viable proposition to deliver coverage to these areas. In these instances, options such as site sharing thus reducing the costs for each operator or an Open Access Model would be a benefit to all parties.

A good example of recent operator collaboration was the Victoria State Governments Regional Rail Connectivity program. All three main mobile operators worked together building new radio sites along the railway lines using a site sharing model to achieve the state government's goal in providing seamless coverage on five key railway lines within the state.

About VirtuGrp

VirtuGrp is an ICT Services organisation specialising in Advisory, Deployment and Operation of existing and emerging technologies such as IoT, 5G, Cloud Edge and Information Governance. Operating across multiple countries in Europe and the Asia Pacific, VirtuGrp provides services to customers in telecommunications, energy and utilities, mining and natural resources, as well as other industries. The purpose of VirtuGrp is to harness the power of people and technology to do good things for customers, society and planet.