CityFibre reduces test time by 99% with test automation

Red Helix

At a glance

Solutions from Red Helix

- Keysight test equipment
- Huber+Suhner Polatis Optical Switch
- Lepton Systems Electrical Switch
- Quali CloudShell Automation Software

Outcome for CityFibre

Accelerated time to market & streamlined adoption of new technologies.

"Rigorous testing is key to ensuring that new products and network technology upgrades can get to market faster. The new carrier grade, future-fit testing infrastructure and processes we have put in place through our partnerships with Red Helix and ePlus have transformed our capabilities, driving greater speed, volume, accuracy and efficiency. This will deliver even better outcomes for our wholesale partners and the homes and businesses they serve."
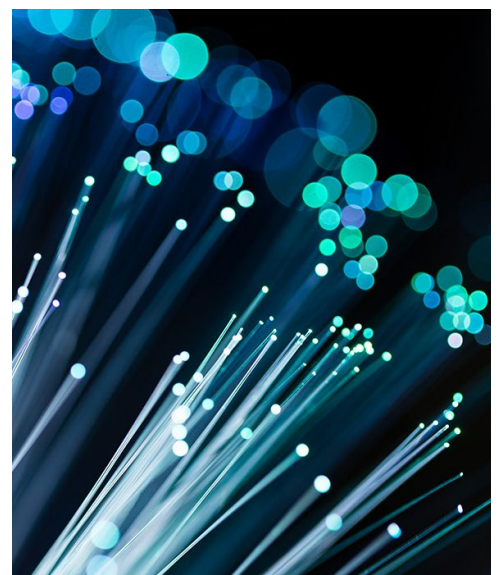
David Tomalin, CTO, CityFibre

CityFibre

Introduction

CityFibre is the UK's largest independent Full Fibre infrastructure platform, providing carrier-neutral digital infrastructure to its wholesale customers and enabling ultra-fast, reliable and future-proof broadband, ethernet and 5G services to serve homes and businesses as well as schools, hospitals and GPs surgeries.

With the Altnet sector being a hugely competitive environment, CityFibre wanted to fully automate its network infrastructure platform test environment – a dedicated facility where all its new products, network technology changes and software upgrades are rigorously tested prior to implementation across its nationwide network.
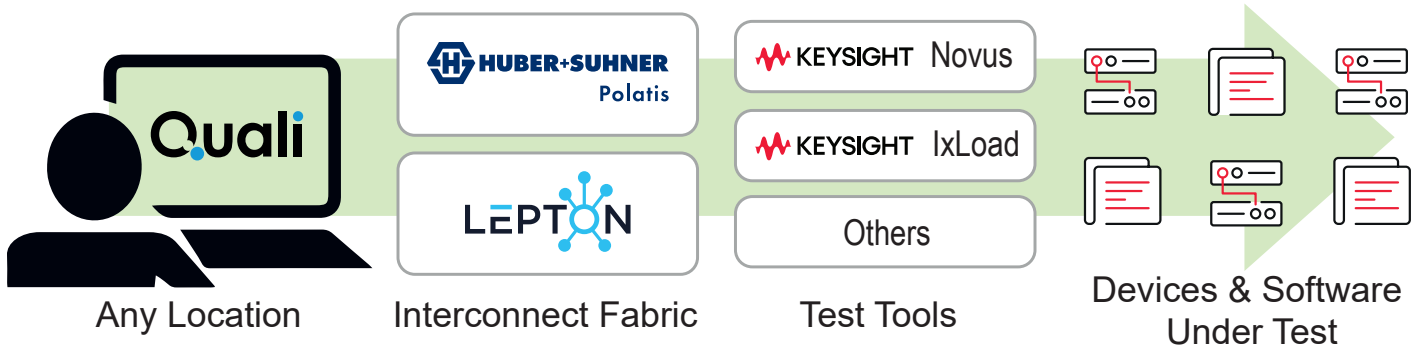
To do this, CityFibre engaged with leading test and lab automation provider, Red Helix, to support the drive for test automation and all the competitive advantages it can bring.

The solution

Combined with a bespoke automation framework designed and built with professional services from ePlus, the test infrastructure from Red Helix consists of advanced technologies such as Keysight Ixia Novus and IxLoad platforms to simulate complex network environments and improve equipment lifecycle, reliability and flexibility.

To facilitate seamless physical connectivity and eliminate the need for cabling before each test, Huber+Suhner Polatis optical switches and Lepton Systems Layer 1 switches are used.

The test infrastructure environment is controlled using Quali CloudShell test automation software, allowing for continuous remote testing, scheduling, and management of multiple tests through a simple interface, with consolidated reporting.

The outcome and capability

The new end-to-end test automation capability has reduced the duration of each test by up to 99% while increasing test capacity by 300%. With tests previously taking 15 minutes now taking just 10 seconds, and the ability to run tests outside core working hours, CityFibre's engineers have more time to address issues raised during the tests themselves. The automation solution also enables rapid analysis and interrogation of test data, while maximising equipment lifecycle by reducing manual touches in an otherwise high touch environment.

As a result of the test automation solution, CityFibre is now able to accelerate operational readiness and bring new products, network technology and software upgrades to market sooner.

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