
GÖRLITZ - Energy Data Management

GÖRLITZ Integrates Sierra Wireless Modules for a Flexible, High-Quality Metering Solution



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GÖRLITZ is a leading manufacturer of Automatic Meter Reading (AMR) and energy information management systems for the retrieval and management of energy data used in billing systems and fault monitoring. The company has more than 800 customers across Europe, mainly from the industrial and energy sectors, where they deploy GÖRLITZ's hardware and software to record, transmit, collect and bill meter data for energy delivery and consumption.

Business challenge

One of GÖRLITZ Austria's core products is its Ethernet/GPRS router which connects electricity meters deployed in the field and allows customers to remotely collect energy usage data.

GÖRLITZ Austria turned to Sierra Wireless to help meet its connectivity challenges. GÖRLITZ required an end-to-end solution to transmit data over a GPRS connection in order to communicate with electricity meters, based on highly reliable and robust industrial-grade hardware. Moreover, they wanted a platform that would enable application development to be as simple as possible.

Sierra wireless M2M Embedded solutions

The Sierra Wireless solution combined the AirPrime Q2686 Embedded Wireless Module, the Open AT® Application Framework and the Developer Studio. The AirPrime Q2686 is a robust, industrial grade and programmable quad-band 2G GPRS module proven across multiple energy-sector deployments. The Open AT Application Framework, provides an M2M-specific operating system as well as a range of ready-to-use software libraries to streamline development time. The Sierra Wireless Developer Studio is an easy-to-use and comprehensive development tool that allows GÖRLITZ to get its products to market quickly, providing a major competitive advantage.

GÖRLITZ Ethernet/GPRS router is able to provide a seamless TCP connection to each electricity meter thanks to the Network Address Translation (NAT), which is now part of the Open AT Internet Library. Helmut Ratzenhofer, CEO of GÖRLITZ Austria, commented: 'Sierra Wireless impressed us by being able to create this application as a bespoke feature to our solution, demonstrating just how flexible they could be as a partner. This feature was vital for us as it enabled our routers to communicate fully with customers' electricity meters.'

Simple to deploy and future-proof

The combined hardware, application framework and development tools of Sierra Wireless ensure that deploying the Ethernet/GPRS router is as simple as possible. Teaming up with Sierra Wireless enabled GÖRLITZ to carry out smooth wireless connectivity integration to its solution and to focus on its core business, as a smart metering expert. GÖRLITZ could incorporate the module quickly and get its gateway to market quickly.

Moreover, with simple asset management and monitoring capabilities and a clear upgrade path built in to the modules, Sierra Wireless has ensured that GÖRLITZ can evolve the router as required. Helmut Ratzenhofer continued: "Sierra Wireless has enabled effective remote management of assets in the field. If a fault were to occur, the solution allows for alarms to be automatically sent to engineers in real time. If a module needs replacing it can be easily identified and switched out, without needing to change the entire gateway. As well as ensuring rapid fault repair, this further benefits our customers by keeping costs down".

Cost effective

Sierra Wireless' solution has helped reduce costs for GÖRLITZ both in terms of cost of deployment and cost of maintaining the routers. Through the streamlined development time enabled by the Open AT Application Framework, the use of its M2M operating system and software libraries within the module, the total cost of deployment was much lower than what competing solutions could offer.

As the Sierra Wireless solution removes the need for GÖRLITZ to deploy an external component to manage the routing function of the gateway, moreover, the total bill of materials for each device is significantly lower than with alternative solutions "by a factor of several dollars per unit.

In addition, Sierra Wireless' modules are industrial-grade and proven in the energy market, built with special features to manage the high power spikes common to the electricity market. Due to this, GÖRLITZ can rest assured that the modules will be robust enough to operate effectively in the field for long periods of time. This can result in further cost savings from not having to repeatedly replace or repair defective modules once they are in the field.

RESULTS

GÖRLITZ customers using its AMR routers are benefitting from having a single communications channel to interrogate meters and send the resulting information to their data centers for analysis. Sierra Wireless' modules are helping GÖRLITZ achieve its aims of providing the most effective, reliable and feature-rich routers through:

- Secure and reliable wireless connectivity
- Robust technology proven in many energy industry deployments
- Fast deployment and cost-effective maintenance and support

Helmut Ratzenhofer concludes: “Sierra Wireless brought to bear its wide experience and expertise in the wireless and energy spaces to deliver us a solution that was easy to integrate and deploy and one that has provided us a platform to create new applications in the future. When combined with our expertise in the smart metering space, we can provide our customers with a gateway that allows them to efficiently gather the intelligence and data they need for their businesses to succeed.”

Solution:

- Wireless Module: AirPrime™ Q2686
- Application Framework: Open AT©
- Development Tools: Developer Studio

Key Benefits:

- Reduced time to market
- Lower bill of materials
- Greater flexibility in deployment
- Future-proof product

