Letter from the Editor: The Blind Infrastructure
By Shawn T. Flemming

It's not surprising that with SUPERCOMM 2005 approaching at a rapid pace that I find myself giddy with excitement. All of the communications professional will be turning out to hoist there exhibits into the sprawling space of Chicago's McCormick Center. From the latest research on next-generation services to time-tested OSS solutions, attendees will revel in all the new possibilities. And along with everyone else I'll be standing awe-struck at the technology that only a year ago was a working theory.

Today, service providers, vendors and their OSS partners are stamping the communications landscape with innovative applications that make work and play an interactive experience. I'm still amazed at the simplicity and speed with which I can sit at my computer, and with a blazing fast connection to the World Wide Web I not only make international calls on my VoIP phone, at the fraction of what I used to pay for local phone calls, but I am simultaneously IM'ing, surfing, downloading and watching a video stream for a movie trailer. The world is at my fingertips, and who do I have to thank for this? I realize it is, in fact, a machine or rather many machines relying on OSS software solutions that make my life easier.

I can order my favorite pizza, the latest Movies-on-Demand, pay my utilities, and even find a new house to live in halfway across the country. It's hard to even remember a time when there was no cell phones much less instant access to my personal accounts via online banking. The truth is I've been taking the whole infrastructure behind my tech-savvy world for granted. Which brings me to wonder, what keeps all of this technology streaming?

Revenue. The times are a'changin and it's not about the Byte anymore. So this issue of Pipeline will focus on the current state of the Billing environment, as well as how to understand and how to avoid excess revenue leakage. Ask yourself this: With so many new service applications, how is your current Billing System integrating the new demands?

Together with two leading executives in the telecommunications industry, Pipeline draws the curtain back to expose, and tinker with, NG Billing Systems. It's about time we all took a closer look at the infrastructure of our technologically-enhanced world, piece by piece.

Enjoy!

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