

From Cologne city carrier to successful regional operator

With an attractive broadband offer based on FTTB and HFC networks, NetCologne is the leading full-service telecoms provider in Cologne and the surrounding districts



“We are building one of the most modern and fastest data networks in Europe here in the region”, said Dr Hans Konle, spokesperson for NetCologne management. “We have gained extensive competence and experience as a regional network operator. I can absolutely imagine providing this know-how to other communities in the form of partnerships outside our present sales area.”

General Information

Infrastructure/ network owner:
NetCologne GmbH

Location:
Economic area Cologne/Bonn (in addition NetAachen GmbH, in which NetCologne holds a stake of 84.9%, supplies broadband to the cities and regions around Aachen, Düren, and Heinsberg).

Network status: Operational

In October 1994 NetCologne Gesellschaft für Telekommunikation mbH was founded by Gas-, Elektrizitäts- und Wasserwerke Köln AG (today: GEW Köln AG), Stadtparkasse Köln, and the transport authority of Cologne. From the beginning NetCologne has laid the foundation for its business success with investments in a state-of-the-art infrastructure. Ground was broken as early as 1995: NetCologne and GEW started to build the network. In the first stage, 3 500 buildings were connected with the latest fibre technology by the end of 1995. With data rates of 155 Mbps and later also with 622 Mbps, telephony and multimedia signals were transmitted over the then high-speed ATM network.

When on January 1st 1998 the telecommunications market for telephony was liberalised, NetCologne was immediately able to offer network and service infrastructures as well as worldwide telephony services. With the early acquisition of licences to operate a public

Deployment

Size of network:

3865 km fibre cable plus 12715 km fibre for FTTB

Subscribers connected (August 2011):

FTTB network: 60,633 households

Technology/architecture:

Fibre-optic network in a ring structure with direct connections to customers via FTTB using active Ethernet – also via the HFC network in parallel

Third party access:

Layer 2 bitstream access

telecommunications network and provide worldwide telephony services, NetCologne is one of the pioneers in this area. Apart from Deutsche Telekom, for many years NetCologne was the only telecommunications operator with its own network.

The company grew rapidly during the years following and increased the number of customers accordingly. By 2002 NetCologne had connected more than 75 000 broadband contractual subscribers to its HFC network. Such a connection provides more than 50 analog and 70 digital TV programs as well as approximately 30 radio stations. But the so-called “Multikabel” can offer even more: to make low-cost telephone calls via one or two lines and to surf the Internet up to 2 Mbps. Thus NetCologne was the first supplier in Germany to offer these three services – known as triple play – as a regular service over a cable TV connection.



In July 2006 NetCologne celebrated the start of building the FTTB network, one of the fastest data networks in Europe. NetCologne is building this new network directly into the buildings of their customers and is thus independent of Deutsche Telekom, from whom the last mile must be rented in the conventional DSL business. With bandwidths up to 100 Mbps, the new network offers at attractive tariffs, not only telephony and Internet but also IPTV, HDTV, and video-on-demand. By offering extremely reasonable tariffs and remarkable technical innovation, NetCologne has become one of the most successful regional carriers in Germany – for the benefit of private and business customers as well as the housebuilding economy in the area of Cologne/Bonn.

Business Case

Investment:

NetCologne invested a total of approx. €350 million into passive networks between 1995 and 2011.

Business model:

As a regional network operator, NetCologne supplies the economic area of Cologne/Bonn with future-proof communications technology. As full-service provider NetCologne operates the network based on their own infrastructure and offers services for telephony, data, and TV for business and private customers.

The technical basis for the company's success is having its own comprehensive fibre network. It is one of the most modern networks in Europe and offers capacities for continued dynamic development of the communications in the region. In 2005 the city of Cologne and NetCologne started a joint project to create 15 HotSpots in selected places in the centre of the city. Visitors also have free access to certain websites such as city information.



In January 2012 NetCologne and Deutsche Telekom signed a partnership agreement. This agreement should allow Telekom to use fibre connections (FTTB) from NetCologne. In turn, NetCologne will rent VDSL connections from Telekom in the commonly served area in North Rhine-Westphalia. The basis for end-user offerings will be a bitstream access product. "We are proud to be the first company in Germany to have signed such an agreement with Telekom," said Konle.



The oversized "Network Node" (above) – the sculpture of the artist Wolfgang Göddert – is a symbol for the telephone network. As well as modern technology and reasonable tariffs, customer service always has been a priority. The company's sign illustrates this philosophy: NetCologne is laying the foundations for good relationships in the ground, and the services offered provide new and convenient ways to communicate.

End-user Services

Business customers:

NetCologne offers comprehensive advice and customized services for small, medium, and large organisations. Fiber-optic connections are offered with symmetrical bandwidths up to 1 Gbps.

Private customers:

Internet connections either via fibre or coaxial cable are offered under the product name "Multikabel" with data rates up to 10 Mbps.

Product examples:

Telephony-Flat €19.90
 Internet-Flat €19.90 up to 25 Mbps
 Double-Flat €29.90 up to 50 Mbps
 and €44.90 up to 100 Mbps
 Various TV offerings from €2.95 to €14.95

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 Photos provided by NetCologne
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