



## More to broadband than bandwidth for small ISPs

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Small Internet service providers attract customers through their personalised service and support, lower prices and in some cases availability, but can lose out to the complex, finely-tuned systems set up by the larger telecommunications companies. However, a broadband wholesaler is now looking to partly redress that balance, offering small ISPs packages that combine bandwidth with quality back-end systems.

ispOne, the wholesale arm of Data Consulting Group (DCG), is targeting ISPs in the 200-3000 customer range by offering cheap bandwidth along with billing and payment systems customised for the ISP industry. The billing system offered by DCG was obtained through the purchase of business-grade broadband supplier Prime Internet.

“So many [ISPs] were trying to do billing with MYOB or Quicken or whatever,” Zac Swindells, director of DCG told ZDNet Australia . This creates a challenge when competing with large companies and their customised billing systems. ispOne offers a billing system customised to the ISP industry, which allows ISPs to send invoices to customers as a PDF printout or by e-mail, and exports the details directly into MYOB or Quicken for accounting purposes.

The billing system is linked directly to an electronic payment system which hooks up with St George and ANZ banks. The system provides extra privacy to the end customer, as once the credit card details are entered only the banks have access to the full credit card number.

Small ISPs that do not have the resources to develop appropriate back-end systems for their business effectively buy the system wholesale from ispone, and can then concentrate on offering good customer service.

ispOne has attracted 30 ISPs over the last six months, and plans to have more than 50 by the end of the financial year. “The industry is saying there’ll be 100 new broadband resellers by the end of the year,” said Swindells. “We want 25 percent of that.”

The ISP owns some infrastructure, and buys bandwidth in locations it doesn’t have infrastructure from Comindico, Telstra, AAPT, and UEComm. It uses the combined buying power of its customers to get the best rates from the tier-one telcos. Swindells said that once a sufficient number of customers were found for a particular area, ispone would install its own infrastructure.