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# INDUSTRY AWARDS CASE STUDY SERIES:
## ICONNECTWE (ICW): CONNECTING THE UNCONNECTED- INDIA

## LM ENERGY AND SOFTWARE PVT. LTD.

## OUR STORY

**Background:** IConnectWe ("ICW"), a LM Energy & Software Pvt. Ltd. (LMES) initiative, has an objective to build a "Public Wi-Fi Network" across the "Indian Unconnected domain", which is mainly Rural India.

ICW is working towards building a bridge between the Urban and Rural "connectivity divide", and bringing over 60% of India's population into the Digital world, and helping them exploit the innovations in the areas of:

•       Digital Education,

•       Healthcare and

•       e-Commerce

This is being achieved by integrating state of art Wireless Wi-Fi technology, backed by strong customer support center to help Rural India come on the digital platform.


**Description:** We are deploying Public Wi-Fi hotspots in the villages, with simple to use front-end applications.

•       Providing fast and cheap packages which meet their rural India's daily, weekly and monthly usage needs.

•       Adding "Rural Entrepreneurs" to drive the penetration of this digital initiative by engaging with them as rural sales and support centers.


ICW aims to provide best in-class technology through our futurist robust platform, which is backed by state of the art Network operations Centre and Cloud architecture.

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ICW believes in "partner in progress" and has launched its first network in Rajasthan and "On-boarded" 1100+ retailers till date, to extend our reach to the remotest parts of our first operation in seven districts of Rajasthan. We plan to scale up to 25,000 retailers by 2020.  ICW already has about 600,000 customers on-boarded onto its Wi-Fi platform and its network includes close to 1750+ public Wi-Fi hotspots and 1800+ Rural Enterprises who have become our permanent customers.

ICW aims to be the largest Public Wi-Fi company across the entire Indian rural market with about 150,000 hotspots in the next 3~4 years.

ICW is also introducing new features in the technology layer to help with better Customer Experience, Rural Support and Integrated Payment solution, which will help in ease of distribution and collections across the network.

**Learnings: Wi-Fi as a complementary technology**

Wi-Fi is a complementary technology to the existing Telecommunication Service Providers, and not a competing technology. In locations where the TSPs are not present, mobile data offloading is being used to route the internet traffic to our Wi-Fi network. This will help TSPs to enhance their reach to rural area. Similarly, Opex cost of Wi-Fi network is reduced due to revenue share with TSPs.

Wi-Fi technology is used to provide Internet access to devices that are within the range of a wireless network that is connected to the Internet. The coverage of one or more interconnected access points (hotspots) can extend from an area as small as a few rooms to as large as many square kilometers. Wi-Fi most commonly uses the 2.4 gigahertz (12 cm) UHF and 5.8 gigahertz (5 cm) SHF ISM radio bands.

## THE SOLUTION

To address the challenge of last mile internet connectivity in Rural India, wireless data communication technologies (Wi-Fi Network) is the best alternative and can play an important role in the penetration of internet connectivity in terms of:

•      Ease of Deployment

•      Faster Roll out

•      Flexibility of putting infrastructure as per usage requirement

- Easy to install, Low Opex and maintenance

- Most cost effective as per density of users

- Future Proof

Please visit www.iconnectwe.com for testimonials.

## PARTNERSHIPS

For new deployments, our strategy is to have a hybrid model, comprising of the Public Wi-Fi subscribers and Home/SMB subscribers. Our long-term vision is to move towards:

- Connected Homes

- Internet of Things (IoT) use cases

- Smart Devices

For sustainability and growth, we are adding new revenue streams and have optimized deployments. We have introduced the distributor layer in addition to the retailer layer. Since the distributor is a local businessman, we gain the benefit of understanding the localized requirements and also ensure continued business expansions from the first day.

## WI-FI MONETIZATION USE CASES

### 1. Ads on Wi-Fi Login Page

The idea is to Configure ads using web-based interface.

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- Nearly 70% users would watch ads in exchange for some free Wi-Fi
- Promote brands and monetize by offering ads for access, and high- speed access for an additional fee.
- Ads can be customized in the form of banners or video clips.

## 2. Bundled Data Packages with OTT Players/Content Providers

The OTT players or content providers can enter into partnership model to offer bundled packages to the subscribers.

This is a two-way monetization: One is the direct revenue share with the content providers and, second, the streaming consumes data bytes at a much faster pace, leading to recharges before expiration of data packs. Target content could be for:

- Music and Entertainment
- Education
- Remote Healthcare
- Cloud
- IT infrastructure

### 3. Mobile Data Offload (MDO)

The business case for Wi-Fi offload is both about saving on costs and reducing churn.
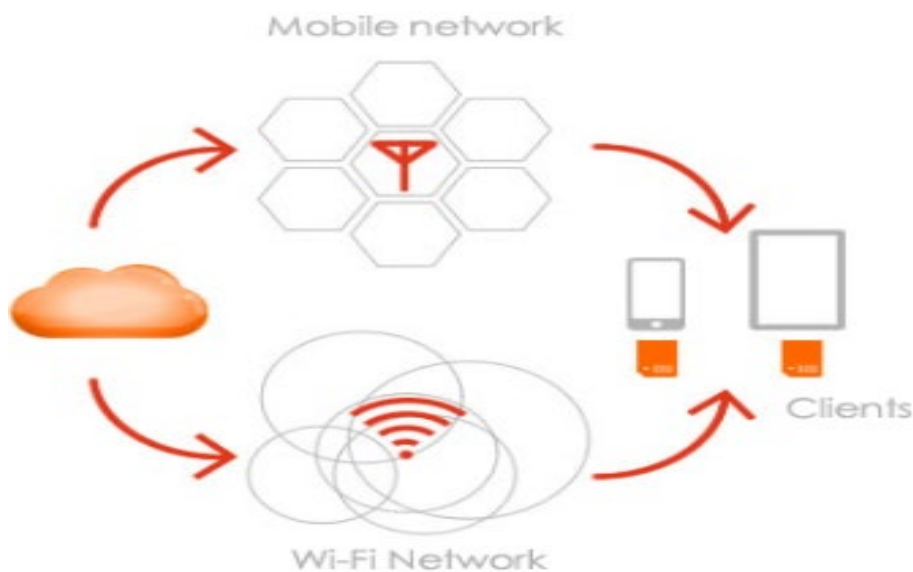


By offloading users from the 3G/4G network to Wi-Fi networks, mobile operators can add more capacity in an affordable and flexible way. Both subscribers and devices tend to connect to Wi-Fi whenever it is in reach.

## BUSINESS/SOCIAL IMPACT

In rural India, the average per annum capital of people is around 700$, means $2 a day. ICW not only provides affordable Internet services to rural communities but also encourages & promotes students, women, farmers to use internet connectivity to access various relevant information, which is directly or indirectly helping them to improve their livelihoods in terms of access to online education, agriculture information, govt. schemes etc.

ICW on-boarded, trained and supported 800 small retailers in rural area for distribution of Internet services to the villages/towns through selling of vouchers. This helped them to earn more income.

Trained the small entrepreneurs (like cottage industries, small food dhabas etc.) in rural area to use the Internet to promote their products online and enhance their business.

Basic infrastructure to support digital govt. initiatives like:

• Educational Purposes; Smart Classrooms

• Healthcare: Remote access to better medical facilities/diagnostics sitting in rural areas

• Increased economic opportunities in rural areas/Job Growth/ability to work from home

• Small Businesses: Platform for Local retailers and buyers to sell goods/services

• Connecting with families via Video calling

• Entertainment purposes

Being an innovative product and service delivery company, ICW is focused on returns and optimization of resources to generate growth. We provide our users access to the digital world.