

## Squirrel Internet Grows its "AltNet" Business with netElastic vBNG

Founded in 2020, Squirrel Internet is an alternative network operator (AltNet) in the United Kingdom and uses wholesale fiber networks to extend its coverage. Wholesale fiber networks are also known as "Open Access Providers" and "Fiber Network Operators (FNOs)" in other countries.

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Squirrel Internet has grown its subscriber base by providing fast internet service, excellent value, and local customer support. As a new company building its business, Squirrel originally used open-source software as a broadband network gateway (BNG). Although cost-effective, this software didn't have the BNG features that Squirrel needed – a BNG that could support diverse networks that delivered customer connections over double-tagged VLANs to deliver the best performance and interoperability with their wholesale networks.

When Squirrel began evaluating potential BNG vendors, they started with the large router manufacturers. However, the high costs were an eye-opener. "Spending £20,000 – £30,000 British pounds (plus licenses) with Juniper was a non-starter for us," said Daniel B., Technical Director at Squirrel Internet. "And we didn't want to go down the route of using MikroTik, since they're known to have scalability problems."

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### Scalability and Pay-as-You-Grow Model

Squirrel then looked at software-based BNGs, including netElastic vBNG. An immediate advantage was that netElastic vBNG could run on Dell servers that Squirrel already had in their data center. Squirrel's Daniel B. commented, "We didn't have to buy hardware we didn't need, so the start-up costs with netElastic were very reasonable. And we could scale easily by just ordering

more software licenses. The pay-as-you-grow model with netElastic vBNG was very attractive.”

“netElastic vBNG also delivered all the features we needed on day one, such as IPv4 and IPv6 support, and netElastic supports wholesale networks with tagged VLANs or via L2TP LAC/LNS,” continued Squirrel’s Daniel B. Today, Squirrel has three wholesale providers but expects to expand to five or more. According to Daniel, “With the netElastic vBNG solution, there is really no limit to how far we can expand. The features are there, and the BNG capacity is easy to upgrade as we grow.”

“Before we made our final decision, we looked at another company’s vBNG, but when we talked with netElastic’s engineering and support team, we realized that netElastic vBNG was exactly what we were looking for. It checked all the boxes. It does everything that you would want a vBNG to do.”

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## Maintaining Uptime and Customer Satisfaction

Implementing netElastic vBNG was easy. Daniel B. stated, “The support is excellent, and netElastic is really good at teaching us about the products and how to use them properly. We installed netElastic vBNG in our data center, where it still is today. It’s been up for over 740 days, so what more can we ask for?”

Daniel continued, “We’ve installed another netElastic vBNG in a new hardware upgrade, which will help us go from 2,000 subscribers to 10,000 to 20,000 subscribers. With that solution, we can easily scale by adding vBNG subscriber licenses whenever needed. And from a software perspective, we’ve had no problems – nothing has ever gone wrong.”

Squirrel Internet prides itself on providing excellent customer support, which makes netElastic a good fit. “The support we’ve received from netElastic has been much better than I expected. I really like how netElastic provides support - we can ping each other whenever needed,” said Daniel. “I like the one-on-one feel we get from working with netElastic.”