

# 2degrees of closeness: Staying on top by staying on trend



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New Zealand operator 2degrees arrived on the scene in 2009, soon ranking second in the prepaid market and then growing via post pay to more than 1.3 million customers. Living by the slogan “It’s 2degrees of closeness, not 6 degrees of separation,” company CEO Stewart Sherriff believes that bringing simplicity to product and service plans is the secret to sustainable growth.

By Linda Xu

## Not just speed

### Reaching more than half of all Kiwis

**2**degrees covers 96 percent of New Zealand and has brought 4G network coverage to almost 60 percent of the nation’s population over the past year. We’re planning to roll out 4G in the following eight locations in 2016 to bring coverage to 70 percent: Christchurch, Cambridge, Huntly, Kapiti, Masterton, Motueka, Oamaru, and Whakatane.

Continuing our 4G rollout across the country, new 2degrees customers can expect fantastic services and high data speeds. We’re seeing huge data throughput, especially video, which is fast becoming the main data-hungry service.

### Content is king

Buying the ISP Snap last year has allowed us to accelerate our entry into the broadband market using

Snap’s incredible national network infrastructure. By providing both mobile and broadband services for our customers, we’re well positioned to compete in all segments of the market. This will let us support our customers’ growing digital needs. We aim to deliver a reliable connection, quality customer service and, most importantly, make the choice and process simple for our customers.

Last year, 2degrees partnered with Sky NEON, a premium content provider, to give customers unlimited access for six months to a world of movies and TV on-demand. Whether our customers are fans of Disney movies and HBO TV series or whether they’re looking for some fun, there’s something for all tastes on NEON.

## Taking on high-tech

### Virtual reality (VR) becomes commercial

When people speak of VR, they only think about gaming where you put on a headset to

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– Stewart Sherriff, 2degrees CEO

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get immersed in a game. But I see the wider commercial opportunities. For example, New Zealand is very environmentally minded, with many regulations covering the fishing industry, including the size of nets and catch quotas. Currently, the only way the government can enforce this is to put inspectors on vessels. To simplify the process, we're working with companies that have developed 360-degree cameras with memory storage on board to capture what's going on in a given boat. The data is then transferred over our 4G network to a central server. Administrative officers can sit in comfort in their office with a VR headset on and look around the fishing boat to see what's happening.

### Cashing in on Internet of Things (IoT)

According to a McKinsey survey last year, IoT will be worth US\$11 trillion annually by 2025. Health, transportation, agriculture and infrastructure in New Zealand will be impacted the most.

2degrees is working with a number of different partners. We're looking at narrowband IoT, LTE-U, and so on. The usual application scenarios are electric, gas, and water meters, and there are over a million sensors installed in New Zealand at the moment. But, people are still using the old 2G technology. So, there's a huge opportunity now.

We've also found that in some cities in New Zealand, 30 percent of all traffic on the roads is actually people looking for a parking spot. So by having a simple sensor on empty parking spots, you can go directly there. We're also working with a company that examines the water quality of harbors in New Zealand. Real-time signals will mean people can know when they can swim in safe, clean water. I think city life and safe city management is a great opportunity for IoT.

IoT in agriculture definitely has a promising future. Sensors have already been placed across some large farms to send data to irrigation systems, saving many man-hours and preventing costly mistakes through

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lack of water. Some vineyards have also introduced sensors to measure the sugar levels of vines, so they can be made from grapes with perfect sugar content.

### Health at full throttle

2degrees serves some of New Zealand’s largest businesses, including district health boards (DHBs), tertiary providers, and national retailers. We bring innovative mobile and fixed network solutions to our enterprise customers. Recently, 2degrees was appointed to the Government’s Telecommunications as a Service (TaaS) provider panel, meaning we can now provide updated mobile services and new fixed connectivity services for the government.

Canterbury District Health Board is the main planner and funder of health services in the district. 2degrees’ healthcare solution, HealthBridge, securely connects care providers with multiple healthcare applications and data sources, ranging from public and private hospitals, radiology departments, and labs to Primary Health Organizations, individual GPs and district nurses. 2degrees also manages the Southern Health

WAN that connects three South Island DHBs and affiliated care providers. 2degrees provides high availability bandwidth, which is now an essential part of hospitals for patients and staff. For example, we’re replacing written materials with online modules and live video for use in staff training.

In-patients want to continue their lives outside as much as possible, and this often requires Internet access to stay in touch with friends and family or pay household bills online.

2degrees also offers mobile, voice, and data services to the University of Waikato, with 1,500 staff spread over the campuses in Hamilton and Tauranga. Staff are free to move onto flexible plans tailored to their particular usage habits, and each user can share data with five other devices or people.

Students, friends, and family can also access competitive data plans through the university’s partnership with 2degrees. As a result, the university has reduced its mobile costs by 48 percent, saving about US \$ 200,000 per year. [www](#)