

eWise Systems Powers first direct's Internet Banking plus Service

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eWise Systems, the world's leading customer driven account aggregation provider, today announces the successful completion of first direct's "Internet Banking plus" service implementation. Internet Banking plus is a landmark first direct service, providing UK consumers the flexibility of online account aggregation, even if they are not a first direct customer.

first direct is pushing the boundaries of UK internet banking by providing a financial home that allows both existing and potential customers to manage their finances from a single sign-on web page.

"first direct is renowned for its customer service and innovation, so we are delighted to use eWise's account aggregation software to deliver Internet Banking plus" says Paul Say, first direct's head of e-marketing. "People are adopting online financial services at a fast pace and Internet Banking plus makes managing money online easier than ever".

Most existing account wrapping's internet services provide one view of a customer's account information at any one bank, or building society. With eWise Systems, customers can use its patented digital safe, assigned to their PC, to manage financial information from many different sources, all on one page.

Results from the survey conducted by payment services group BACS have shown that internet banking has more than doubled since the year 2000. The number of online banking users has reached 7.8 million compared to 3.5 million in 2000.

"Any consumer with multiple bank accounts, or financial products can benefit from a single view of their financial world" says Mark Matthews, Managing Director, eWise Systems. "Internet banking and aggregation services are no longer the domain of 'high net worth' individuals and first direct has acted on the significant customer service and business intelligence benefits created by the natural expansion of this market. Our customers are buying the eWise solutions because we can demonstrate the ROI".

"The eWise Systems account aggregation model provides banks with the opportunity to gain a broader understanding of a customer's financial behaviour, giving them greater intelligence to develop and target products and services for consumers" says Matthews. "The upside for customers is better service and greater autonomy. By consolidating internet accounts, it also means that there is no more need to remember multiple passwords to multiple accounts".

first direct's internet banking plus service launched on 26 April 2004.

- Ends -

first direct

- first direct was launched in October 1989, creating a revolutionary financial service - offering branchless telephone banking for the first time in the UK.

- first direct offers a choice of communication channels (eg. telephone, internet, mobile phone, paying-in at branches) designed around the customer's individual needs and focused on delivering

exceptional customer service.

- first direct has 1.1 million customers and handles over 235,000 calls per week, with over 40% of these calls outside normal office hours (including weekends).

- 67% of first direct's contact with customers is electronic, with 585,000 internet banking customers and 350,000 text message banking customers.

eWise Systems

eWise Systems is a software development company created to meet the demands of financial institutions and on-line service providers wishing to build and retain customer loyalty by providing private & secure account aggregation and related services. eWise systems has pioneered and patented the development of the customer driven account aggregation model, providing its financial service customers with a demonstrated ROI utilising the next generation in account aggregation technology.

eWise Systems enterprise Account Aggregation application suite includes Account Aggregation, eMarketing, Transaction, Mobile & Wealth Management applications. The Account Aggregation application suite is licensed to customers in the UK and Australia, with a number of successful implementations including Egg, first direct, Westpac and Moneynet.

For More information, please contact:

Billy Hamilton-Stent/Chris Gent

Octopus Communications

Billy@octopuscomms.net

chris@octopuscomms.net

01753 672 755