



America's Center

The America's Center convention complex features 502,000 contiguous square feet of exhibit space in six halls, 83 meeting rooms, and the Edward Jones Dome and sports arena. When administrators at this convention center in St. Louis wanted a wireless network the choice was a BlueSecure™ 2100 Controller from Bluesocket®.



www.americascenter.org

BLUESOCKET DEPLOYMENT AT AMERICA'S CENTER

- Secure wireless network based on a BlueSecure 2100 Controller, with 10 Proxim and Strix Systems wireless access points (APs).
- During a recent championship basketball tourney, additional APs were installed in press and sports dome area.
- System presently provides free wireless access to visitors in main lobby and several common areas outside conference rooms.
- Future plans include providing 802.11a mesh networking, and extended access in Edward Jones Dome and on the multiple exhibit floors (where wired access is now provided).
- There are also plans to more fully map out AP placement, and perhaps use multiple SSIDs and VLANs to segment wireless access to different groups and provide varying levels of access and levels of service to users.

The America's Center complex is a business and cultural hub, where businesspeople can view new products, consumers can watch a St. Louis Rams football game, and tens of thousands of others can take part in a variety of events. At center stage is a Bluesocket wireless network, which now provides secure wireless access to both visitors and clients.

America's Center Convention Center

During the peak of a major basketball competition that took place earlier this year at the Edward Jones Dome in St. Louis, MO, not everyone's eyes were focused on the heart-stopping action taking place on the floor as the best college teams competed for the top prize.

Telecommunications administrators at the America's Center convention complex, which includes the dome area and surrounding meeting rooms, were watching the performance of a new wireless system installed just a week or so earlier as it managed the message and communications traffic from the hundreds of reporters, photographers and others who were charged with covering this annual event and immediately broadcasting results to the world.

The Center's telecommunication team also monitored the wireless activities in nearby common areas and at related events, such as an interactive fan festival and league-sponsored basketball clinics, which along with the games drew more than 50,000 fans to this well-known meeting place located in the heart of downtown St. Louis.

The national sponsor of the sports event "has become very aware of wireless and wanted wireless access available on the dome floor," says Jack Canavera, Telecommunications Manager at America's Center, adding that the wireless network was also used to provide services to attendees at an annual meeting of collegiate basketball coaches taking place at the same time as the collegiate final games.

The America's Center telecommunications team selected a BlueSecure 2100 Controller as the hub of its wireless network, which presently includes 10 Proxim and Strix Systems 802.11 b/g wireless access points (APs) installed in the common areas and main lobby of the convention center. The wireless network also included four or five more wireless APs deployed in the press and meeting rooms and inside the dome area during the popular basketball tourney held in early April. The wireless network connects to the convention center's Nortel/Bay Networks wired system, which is used to provide Internet access to customers on the exhibit floor, and an earlier wireless system installed about two-and-a-half years ago.



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Jack Canavera
Telecommunications Manager
America’s Center

“St. Louis marked the first time all three events were held in the same location, where wireless was used to such an extent” notes Canavera. “I honestly didn’t have time to go out and compare features and system functionality. The BlueSecure system worked and did what I wanted, and now that we have had time to get more into it we’ve been patting ourselves on the back for making a good choice.”

The Challenge for America’s Center

The America’s Center faced a number of technology challenges in hosting this national sports competition and launching a new wireless network in just a matter of days. The basketball coaches association, for example, wanted to provide free wireless access to its attendees, while the group sponsoring the games wanted password access and control because they were selling wireless Internet access services to others during the final playoff series.

Canavera turned to Verizon Select Services, Inc. for advice, since this company provides maintenance and technical support to the America’s Center complex. They recommended Bluesocket and the River City Technology Group, a local systems integrator that specializes in designing and building wireless networks and training users.

River City Technology Group was eager to tackle the project. Due to the prominent status of the America’s Center in the St. Louis metropolitan area, they knew this would be a high profile job. Installing and launching the BlueSecure 2100 Controller went as smooth as a mid-court free-throw. “Once the network is ready to accept the Bluesocket Controller, installation can be done in as little as 30

minutes,” explains Daryl Andershock, a network consultant with River City Technology Group.

The Bluesocket Solution

The initial plan for wireless access at America’s Center, even before the Bluesocket solution was installed, was to offer it free to visitors and guests. For a while, the St. Louis convention site was the only large-scale convention organization that offered free wireless to visitors. America’s Center is now moving beyond that initial plan to expand its wireless system from common area and internal ‘hotspots’ to conference rooms and onto the exhibit floor in 2006/2007, where now only wired access is available to clients.

Future plans include conducting a detailed site survey of the entire convention facility to determine where to place wireless APs to optimize coverage and get the greatest amount of control over the entire Bluesocket system. There are also plans to investigate the use of multiple SSIDs and VLANs to channel wireless access to different groups and provide different levels of access and service to users, explains River City Technology Group’s Andershock.

Canavera is confident the BlueSecure 2100 Controller can easily be scaled to meet almost any challenge that surfaces, whether it involves an increased number of users or next generation client devices and technologies. “It can only get more complicated in terms of traffic and user demands,” he notes. “The important thing is to have a system that can control that wireless network, and fortunately the BlueSecure Controller can enforce rules and handle those requirements.”

Secure Mobility® Solutions



For more information, visit our Website at www.bluesocket.com

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