



Queens Library

When the Queens Library looked for a wireless solution to better serve more than 2 million patrons per year at 63 branch locations, it turned to Bluesocket® to provide a secure and flexible enterprise-class solution that could keep pace with the library's diverse needs.



www.queenslibrary.org

BLUESOCKET DEPLOYMENT AT QUEENS LIBRARY

- Wireless network based on a centralized BlueSecure 5000 Controller, presently connecting 11 Cisco 1400 APs in 11 different branch locations
- Plans are to expand to 15 locations by Q4 2005, and to 75 APs in 63 locations
- System is SIP2 database compliant and manages user access by library card ID and date of birth
- Users authenticate through the wireless network and out to the Internet through dedicated T1 and T3 communications lines
- BlueSecure 5000 Controller can also limit size of file transfers, and works with third-party filtering software for federally-mandated CIPA compliance

Queens is one of five boroughs in New York City and one of the most ethnically-diverse counties in the U.S., with its mix of non-English-speaking immigrants from all parts of the world. This is one reason why Queens Library selected a BlueSecure™ 5000 Controller as the base of a wireless network that helps the library continue in its role as the information hub of the community.

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The perception most people have of a library is a place where there are lots of books and information that is available in a variety of different forms, from traditional printed material to audio and digital DVDs. It is a place where people can come to borrow the latest romance novel, scan newspapers and magazines from around the world, or research a topic for a school term paper.

All of this is business-as-usual at the Queens Library in New York City, although it is a bit more complicated since the library provides a range of services to patrons from a variety of different countries and cultures who happen to call New York their home. In fact, one of the library's branches, in Flushing, houses an International Resource Center that includes more than 55,000 international items and a collection that is only 50 percent in English. The remainder consists of materials in 44 other languages.

The Challenge for Queens Library

In an effort to better serve its patrons throughout Queens, the library decided last year to expand its current IT networks with a second wireless system that could eventually be used by all 63 branches. The library's IT

staff selected a BlueSecure™ 5000 Controller from Bluesocket® because it is flexible enough to keep up with the organization's unique demands and can easily manage secure wireless access and control at each Queens Library location

The system was installed at the library's Jamaica, NY main branch in early May and was scheduled to include 11 locations by the end of summer. By the time the planned rollout of the Bluesocket wireless network is complete, all 63 locations and at least 75 Cisco 1400 APs will be linked to the BlueSecure Controller.

The Bluesocket Solution

Library administrators actually got involved in wireless several years ago as a more realistic and cost-effective alternative to installing additional T1 communications lines between buildings. They decided to install a series of 'line-of-sight' wireless networks, which are still used by the library's administrative staff. These early networks, however, are not available to the general public since they connect directly to the library's financial and core information system and lacked the necessary security safeguards.



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Philip Darsan
Chief Technology Officer
Queens Library

The search for a wireless system that could be used by patrons began last year when Queens Library applied for funding through the Federal Universal Service Fund, more generally known as E-Rate. Through this program, eligible schools, libraries and other groups receive discounts of up to 90% for new and existing network and telecommunications services.

Queens Library Chief Technology Officer Philip Darsan was attending an American Library Association conference in Florida last June when he met Rick Cook, a senior consultant with SirsiDynix, a Huntsville, AL systems integrator that specializes in library automation systems. In discussing Queens Library’s unique situation, Cook recommended a Bluesocket solution since his company had worked with that firm to integrate the SIP2 protocol into all of its BlueSecure Controllers. Most libraries use SIP2 for patron authentication, explained Cook.

Queens Library contacted Bluesocket and a BlueSecure 5000 demonstration unit was shipped and installed before the end of last year. Installing the BlueSecure Controller was relatively easy since the Cisco 1400 APs were already there in a handful of branches. It was simply a matter of configuring the system to assign an IP address to these branches and recognize the related wireless devices.

“I wanted an enterprise solution. I didn’t want a box here and a box there,” says Darsan. “I also wanted a solution that could offer some type of security, so that we know who the people are logging into our network. As we expand, we can look at the BlueSecure 5000 management capabilities to decide how to deploy in the future.”

One feature that appealed to the Queens Library staff is the BlueSecure Controller’s ability to manage user access and restrict wireless availability to specific groups of people, based on the records associated with their library cards. This is especially important in helping Queens Library comply with the federally-mandated Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA), which was enacted to shield young patrons from obscene or pornographic material that is on the Internet.

The BlueSecure 5000 Controller does this not only by containing wireless coverage within the young adult and adult areas of each library branch, but also by restricting access to patrons of certain age groups. Accomplishing this meant working with multiple vendors to provide secure and reliable user authentication, assigning access privileges by date of birth, and then applying the appropriate multi-category content management technology, explains says Jason Curtis, network manager at Queens Library.

The single BlueSecure 5000 Controller installed at Queens Library directs traffic from each user’s PC through the local AP and out to the Internet by way of hard-wired communications lines. The Controller can also be throttled up or down to restrict large file transfers, or easily adapt to emerging technology such as more powerful PDAs, WiFi-enabled cell phones and voice over IP (VoIP) systems.

Secure Mobility® Solutions



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