



Smart City

Smart City provides wired and wireless communications to the some of the largest and most well-known convention facilities across the country. Behind the scene, Bluesocket® systems are helping the company reach new levels of reliability, scalability and performance.



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Some of the challenges faced by Smart City at its 13 convention sites in the U.S. include keeping up with user demand, providing a worry-free wireless experience, and avoiding any surprises for clients when it comes to the network and Wi-Fi communications at an event. Bluesocket makes these challenges a lot less daunting and puts Smart City in a better position for future growth.

BLUESOCKET DEPLOYMENT AT SMART CITY

- Multiple BlueSecure Controllers at 13 major convention sites across the country
- Deployment and layout of wireless networks depend on building design and structure at each location
- Most conference facilities use 802.11b and g, although the company is gradually expanding 802.11a usage for increased reliability and bandwidth and looking at MIMO technology for better coverage and performance
- Bluesocket credit card authorization system helps process multiple wireless service levels for customers
- Network security is important at each facility although reliability, scalability and performance top the list of customer needs
- Single system has handled up to 5,400 simultaneous users at a major conference
- Bluesocket system capabilities are a key selling point when pitching business to new clients

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When hundreds or even thousands of people turn out for a conference or event in a major city location many of these people will worry about travel and hotel reservations, or if they will have enough time to attend the right sessions and meetings.

Some may even suffer through long lines as they work their way to the exhibit floor.

One thing they won't have to worry about, however, is wirelessly accessing their email when they finally arrive on the show floor or sit down in a crowded conference room. They also won't be concerned about sending a quick instant message to a colleague who may literally be a mile away on the other side of a huge convention hall. Not if the convention center is one of 13 across the country that has been wireless-enabled by Smart City, the nation's largest provider of voice, data and video event technology for the convention industry.

Smart City was founded in 1984 and provides wireless data services for convention centers in California, Florida, Nevada, Washington, D.C. and other business hubs. Earlier this year, the company flipped the switch to provide 802.11 wireless access to the massive Fort Worth Convention Center, which extends across 14 blocks of the city's Central Business District.

About a month later, Smart City installed a new wireless network at the Charlotte (NC) Convention Center as part of an extension of a current contract with that facility.

The wireless systems in all 13 convention centers are based on Bluesocket BlueSecure™ Wireless Controllers, which often manage user log-ons and traffic at multiple and simultaneous events and can easily scale to handle a few hundred or thousands of users.

"As you scale up the number of users, you are putting a lot of traffic through the Bluesocket Controller," says Ron Shaul, Smart City's Director of Technology Development. "We needed a solution that provides high performance and scalability, with plenty of room left over for any unforeseen issues," he added, noting why the company earlier this year selected Bluesocket to replace a previous wireless system.

The Challenge for Smart City

Having Bluesocket in its corner proved a smart move by Smart City when more than 10,000 high-tech executives streamed into the Las Vegas Convention Center for the CTIA conference and exhibition. The company made the decision to go with Bluesocket in February, so the gathering in Las Vegas was one of the first major tests of the BlueSecure Controller and its capabilities.



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Director of Technology Development
Smart City

“Technology-focused show attendees are not your average users,” notes Shaul. “They are doing a lot of sophisticated things on the network, which is really going to require some heavy iron.”

At the height of the CTIA event, the Bluesocket network managed more than 2,000 simultaneous users, added Shaul. “Other vendors cannot scale up to support that large of an event and that many users.” At another large conference held at the Las Vegas Convention Center, the Bluesocket network managed more than 5,400 simultaneous users.

Scalability is one of the major reasons why Smart City selected Bluesocket for its growing list of convention center clients, and a key factor in the company’s decision to expand the use of these flexible and reliable systems from 14 today to over 30 Controllers.

“One of the really nice things about Bluesocket is that it’s really been ‘access agnostic,” says David Langford, Smart City’s VP of Technology. “The Bluesocket Controller adapts to whatever backend technology we deploy, wired or wireless, and is able to accept and work with it.”

The Bluesocket solution and its ability to easily manage user bandwidth and provide integrated credit card billing have also enhanced the company’s payment process, which is the lifeblood of its business.

Bluesocket added software that allows Smart City to process customer credit cards against major financial clearing houses, without going outside of the log-in process. As a result, users can select a variety of connect options and use their credit cards to automatically pay for wireless service plans.

“The systems give us an edge because we’re a one-time-use wireless service provider,” adds Langford. “Our billing systems cater to that limited time and need and Bluesocket helps enhance that short-term experience.”

The Bluesocket Solution

The flexible and reliable nature of the Bluesocket technology is also a boon when designing and operating wireless networks for trade shows and conferences. “Every convention center and event is different and has its own Wi-Fi mapping signature”, says Shaul. The Smart City team may spend months surveying a conference center to decide the proper number and placement of wireless access points.

BlueSecure Controllers are able to keep up with changing demands and instantly pinpoint any problems that may occur in the network before and during an event. The Controllers also offer failsafe protection, which is something that wasn’t available with the previous networking system.

“We don’t want things to fail in the middle of a conference,” says Langford.

The Bluesocket Solution also provides an edge when pitching business to new customers, who view reliability, scalability and performance as technology mandates.

“More often than not we hear stories about events at other facilities, that are not Smart City facilities, which have failed,” says Ron Shaul. “When customers talk to us about having a show and their technical requirements, we definitely stress the capabilities of our network and the capabilities provided by Bluesocket,” adds Shaul.

Secure Mobility® Solutions



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

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