

HEAVENLY WI-FI LINKS CHURCH AND COMMUNITY AT TRADERS POINT



Modern worship practices call for a modern technology infrastructure at institutions like Traders Point Christian Church. There, church leaders envisioned providing attendees with BYOD access to various online resources, including digital bibles, sermon text and even social networking sites.

"We wanted to give people the ability to use their devices to make notes in their bible app or share their thoughts on social media sites in real time," explains Tim Broad, IT Director at the Indianapolis-based Traders Point, which draws nearly 5,500 attendees to its media-rich interactive weekend services and hosts more than 100,000 guests annually.

But the organization's existing wireless network couldn't handle such new demands. "When 40 or 50 people accessed a node on our legacy system it crashed," Broad says. "We needed an enterprise solution that could reliably support hundreds or thousands of wireless and mobile devices accessing the network simultaneously."

Dedicated to serving the community as well as its congregation, the church offers a unique combination of public-use facilities within its 300,000 square-foot building. This includes a 2700-seat Worship Center, café, library, double-court gymnasium and one of the largest indoor playgrounds in the state of Indiana.

"In addition to worship services with interactive multi-media presentations, we host special events that draw thousands of people in a single day," says Broad. "And, during the week, there are several hundred to a thousand people who stop by our facility to study, take fitness classes, experience the climbing wall or meet for coffee."

To achieve its faith goals and be accessible to the surrounding community, Broad says the organization was "very intentional" with how it planned its facility's myriad spaces. "Similarly, we wanted to be intentional with implementing the technology infrastructure to provide a place where people gather together and have access to the outside world," Broad says.

That's why Traders Point sought to blanket all areas with high-performance wireless. "Although many places in the community offer Wi-Fi, the speeds are often really slow," says Broad. "We decided to remove all of those hindrances to staff, church members and guests so we could engage people in multiple and relevant ways."

BENEFITS:

- Ubiquitous Aruba WLAN provides church and community members with robust network and Internet access for church-owned and BYOD devices whether attending services, visiting the cafe, studying in the library or playing in the large indoor park and recreation facility.
- Leverages Aruba Mobility Controllers and Aruba AP135 access points for high-performance connectivity.
- Includes Aruba AirWave Network Management for centralized Wi-Fi network optimization and management to deliver exceptional user experiences regardless of device type.
- Provides the flexibility to add MST200 outdoor wireless mesh access routers and Aruba Instant APs for high-performance wireless connectivity at overflow sites during special events.
- Enables building-out the solution to include Aruba ClearPass Access Management System for centralized, comprehensive policy enforcement.



"With our church membership and BYOD needs exploding a robust, reliable and secure Wi-Fi network has become mission-critical for us."

*– Tim Broad, IT Director,
Traders Point Christian Church*

ARUBA ANSWERS THE CALL

After evaluating numerous providers, including Cisco, Meraki, Ruckus and Ubiquity, Traders Point selected Aruba Networks as the best fit. “Aruba helped us ensure Wi-Fi was available in every nook and cranny of our building,” Broad says. “Aruba also connected us with a local partner, Melsernet, for installation assistance.”

For reliable and high performance wireless access, the church chose Aruba’s AP135 access points and paired them with Aruba Mobility Controllers. This enabled the organization to provide an appropriate amount of coverage to every space in its facility to meet density demands.

Traders Point also appreciates the management capabilities of its new WLAN in the form of the Aruba AirWave Network Management solution. AirWave provides centralized Wi-Fi network optimization and management for delivery of exceptional user experiences.

By adopting AirWave, the church gains significant and granular insights into its Wi-Fi network. This includes the types of devices logging on, the specific access points devices are connected to and the total number of devices on the network at any given time. With AirWave, the organization’s IT staff can quickly fine-tune the network to meet the needs of all users.

Additionally, Aruba’s technology is helping the organization extend its regional reach. “Over the next several years we plan to add locations around the greater Indianapolis metro area,” affirms Broad. “We’ll use capabilities in Aruba’s controllers to create virtual private networks (VPN) to connect all of our locations to the same LAN.”

For those build-outs, Traders Point intends to leverage the new IEEE 802.11ac standard, also called “Gigabit Wi-Fi”, which significantly improves the wireless experiences. Because Wi-Fi is a shared resource, the added capacity delivered by 802.11ac comes in handy as an increasing number of mobile devices are accessing wireless at the same time.

The 802.11ac standard not only offers three times the performance, or 1.3 Gigabits per second (Gbps), for newer compatible devices but also significantly boost speeds for 802.11n and older devices. “Anything new we deploy at our existing campus or our new locations will be 802.11ac,” Broad says.

ENABLING APPS

With its Aruba wireless network, Traders Point is engaging worshipers and the larger community in new and exciting ways. “One of our most popular ways people use our Wi-Fi is to access a digital Bible during a service,” says Broad.

“We also offer a church app,” he adds. “It enables users to click through to learn more about a ministry that’s being discussed during a presentation or to click on the sermon’s notes to follow along on their mobile devices. There are even Twitter and Facebook icons to enable posting to those sites.”

In fact, Traders Point sermons typically include a social media component. “We actually put the Twitter handle of the speaker and the hashtag of the current sermon series up on the screen just as the speaker starts to deliver a message,” says Broad. “By putting it on the screen for everyone to see we encourage tweeting and re-tweeting.”

During special events Aruba provides the organization with scaling and flexibility unimagined, before. For example a recent Father’s Day celebrity event drew such large crowds that two overflow areas were established at the organization’s K-12 school, Traders Point Christian Academy.

Because the academy’s wired and wireless network infrastructure is completely separate from the church, Trader’s Point lacked physical connectivity. To bridge the divide, Broad deployed Aruba MST200 outdoor wireless mesh access routers for high-performance wireless connectivity and mounted several Aruba Instant APs to achieve the needed capacity in some locations.

“Our contractual obligations with the celebrity prohibited streaming the event over the Internet, so we needed to be very careful,” says Broad. “The MST200’s and Instant APs did their jobs very well.”

Moving forward, the church may consider adding Aruba ClearPass Access Management System to give the right users and devices the right access to the right internal and external systems. ClearPass provides organizations such as Traders Point with AAA (Authentication, Authorization, and Accounting) services. This includes managing network policies comprehensively, onboarding and managing devices securely and admitting guest users, all from a single platform.



According to Broad, Aruba is definitely assisting his organization with fulfilling its mission and goals. "Our church membership and service attendance is exploding, as is the type and number of BYOD devices people bring with them," he says. "A robust, reliable and secure Wi-Fi network has become mission-critical for us."

ABOUT ARUBA NETWORKS

Aruba Networks (NASDAQ:ARUN) is a leading provider of next-generation network access solutions for the mobile enterprise. Its Mobile Virtual Enterprise (MOVE) architecture unifies wired and wireless network infrastructures into one seamless access solution, enabling entities of all sizes to securely address the Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) phenomenon, dramatically improving productivity and lowering capital and operational costs.

Based in Sunnyvale, California, Aruba has operations throughout the Americas, Europe, Middle East, Africa and Asia Pacific regions.

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www.arubanetworks.com

1344 Crossman Avenue, Sunnyvale, CA 94089

1-866-55-ARUBA | Tel. +1 408.227.4500 | Fax. +1 408.227.4550 | info@arubanetworks.com