PREMIERSHIP FOOTBALL CLUB SECURES WIRELESS NETWORK

Customer Description

The Madjeski Stadium is one of the most modern football stadiums in the UK. Built in 1998 for Reading Football Club and costing over £50 million, it has seen the club reach the Premiership League – the highest league in the country. The complex, located next to a business park, includes a hotel and an all seated stadium for 24,400 fans in addition to the high class Royal Berkshire Conference Centre.

Problem

The Madjeski Stadium complex had an existing wireless network that needed to be replaced with a scalable network that would be future-proof and secure. The multiplicity of different applications that needed to run on the network, as well as the complexity of the site, meant that the club's IT Team had to research the most robust and resilient solution available on the market. The need at the stadium was to provide the staff of the club, and the football team alike, with a secure network extending the existing wired infrastructure. In addition, the hotel needed to provide internet access to hotel guests.

Securing this complex wireless environment was critical to the club for many reasons. While the hotel provides internet access as a service to guests, it is a revenue generating source for the hotel. The selected wireless network would have to be independently deployed in the same airspace as the football club. The club's needs were players to be able to use wireless laptops/PDAs and for the ground staff to ensure problem free event days for the thousands of fans that attend matches. In addition, journalists sending photos during games needed wireless internet access too. Naturally this presented the club with a number of security issues that had to be overcome before the network went live. Anywhere anytime access has to be safe for the user and for the network infrastructure.

> *"We had to allow for multiple types of wireless users to access a secure Wireless Network"*

Accessing email on the go along with internet availability for the high net worth players while providing journalists with high speed access all help to raise the club's image. A wrongly configured network that is not secure could potentially be vulnerable to all types of hacker attacks.

"At Reading FC we demanded a solution that could integrate seamlessly into Reading FC's existing wired network replacing our current WIFI with a more secure and scalable system. We needed to extend network access to allow for multiple types of wireless users to access a secure Wireless Network. We also required wireless connectivity for PDAs to be used at the many turnstiles around the Stadium for customer support staff to assist with any ticket or seating queries," commented Garry Hanson, Reading FC IT Manager.

Solution

For the infrastructure of the facility's wireless network, the IT team chose Trapeze Networks and for the security they chose AirDefense. A local wireless systems integrator QoLcom was commissioned to deploy the network due to their specialist knowledge and experience in deploying secure wireless LANS.

The infrastructure vendor Trapeze Networks was selected for its powerful management capabilities found in the RingMaster management software. Reading FC's central management station is located in the Madjeski Stadium and relies on RingMaster to provide centralized management of its WLAN. Reading FC purchased the MX-200 mobility exchange switch range to deliver reliable Wi-Fi service for large numbers of users and support for 802.11a, 802.11b and 802.11g, as well as MP-372 54 Mbps wireless mobility points (MPs) to provide wireless LAN access at multiple locations.

AirDefense was selected by Reading FC to provide monitoring of all 802.11 activities and correlating events from across the wireless network. AirDefense provides a complete, enterprise view of everything happening in the airwaves. Powered by the industry's most

advanced IDS engines, policy manager and correlation engines, AirDefense accurately detects and protects Reading FC's network against all wireless threats and unauthorized devices.

Wireless now and in the future

Since the AirDefense solution was implemented, Gary Hanson and his team have been able to detect when and where people are using wireless equipment and devices. They have also been successful in automatically stopping any unauthorised attempts to attach to the network. In addition, the system provides 24x7 monitoring of traffic and potential threats, which will enable the network team to identify and plan for any future wireless installations.

The move to the premiership means Reading Football club has to be known for having state-of-the art facilities. The ability to maintain communications to all staff while they move around the grounds means access to PDAs giving them details of any problems within the crowds during matches.

Gary Hanson is enthusiastic about the benefits and exciting applications that wireless can deliver to the club. He is quick to point out that security can only be assured with the installation of a robust infrastructure, such as that delivered by Trapeze and AirDefense.

Reading football club, like any other enterprise, has to protect against all potential threats and maintain maximum network availability at all times.

About AirDefense, Inc.

AirDefense, the market leader in anywhere, anytime wireless security and monitoring, is trusted by more Fortune 500 companies, healthcare organizations and high-security government agencies for enterprise wireless protection. AirDefense products provide the most advanced solutions for rogue wireless detection, policy enforcement and intrusion prevention, both inside and outside an organization's physical locations and wired networks. Common Criteria-certified, AirDefense enterprise-class products scale to support single offices as well as organizations with hundreds of locations around the globe. Founded in 2001, AirDefense is based in Alpharetta, GA, and serves hundreds of government agencies and blue chip corporations.