

Secure Wi-Fi Helps Museum Soar to New Heights

CHALLENGE

Established in 1965, the Museum of Flight – located at Boeing Field in Seattle, Washington – acquires, preserves, and exhibits historically significant air and space artifacts, attracting more than 500,000 visitors every year. The museum strives to educate and inspire, while also providing a space for continued research in aeronautical and space history and technology.

“When guests come here they have an expectation to see airplanes, but they also – in a modern world – want an interactive experience,” reflected Hunter Hughes, director of IT at the Museum of Flight. “Our previous Wi-Fi solution was one from HP. We faced difficulties in deployment, we faced difficulties in obtaining good analytic data that was actionable, and support was very difficult for us. Often the Wi-Fi couldn’t handle even a moderate number of guests. We would turn off the Wi-Fi in lieu of leaving it on, so that we could offer no Wi-Fi, as opposed to bad Wi-Fi.”

Coupled with the unreliable HP access points were Fortinet firewalls, devices that were producing similarly unsatisfactory results. With Fortinet, it would often take upwards of 30 minutes before Hunter and his team were able to view blocked traffic in the device logs. Additionally, the aging firewalls did not support strong encryption, a critical need for the museum. The Museum of Flight was faced with overhauling not only their Wi-Fi deployment, but their broader network security infrastructure as well. With WatchGuard, they would successfully do both.

SOLUTION

“With limited money and limited staffing, we didn’t have a lot of choices in terms of what we could do to bring efficiency. WatchGuard played a central part in changing that.” To provide strong, secure Wi-Fi access within the museum, Hunter chose to deploy WatchGuard’s AP120 Access Points. Managed by WatchGuard’s Wi-Fi Cloud, the APs provide a host of valuable insights into guest analytics, from dwell time at specific exhibits to length of stay within the museum. Offering powerful data rates of up to 866 Mbps (11ac) and 300 Mbps (11n) the APs would also provide the museum’s staff and guests with the reliable, fast Wi-Fi that was so needed.



CLIENT
Museum of Flight

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES
250

INDUSTRY
Non-profit

REGION
USA

WATCHGUARD PRODUCTS

- AP120
- Wi-Fi Cloud
- M500
- M300
- XTM 850



Safe Surf Zone
Safe Filtered WiFi
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The powerful WIPS (Wireless Intrusion Prevention Service) technology built into the cloud-managed APs would allow Hunter's team to defend the museum's Wi-Fi airspace against threats – from unauthorized devices to wireless DoS attacks – with nearly zero false positives. This critical feature ensures that the Wi-Fi at Museum of Flight is not only reliable and lightning fast, but secure as well. WatchGuard M500, M300, and XTM 850 firewalls were also adopted, further securing the museum's network and offering the visibility and ease of management that was so lacking with their Fortinet appliances. Dimension, WatchGuard's cloud-based network visibility and reporting solution, has been especially beneficial. "Dimension's near real-time response is a game changer. We are able to quickly and easily define new rules and operations in the Firebox management interface with no network downtime."

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~ Hunter Hughes, Director of IT, Museum of Flight

RESULTS

The WatchGuard deployment has empowered the Museum of Flight with the performance and ease of management that their previous APs never could. "With the WatchGuard solution, the implementation was easy. The museum can scale up or out at any given moment, and we know that WatchGuard will be able to grow with us," noted Hunter. "We've found that the dashboard within the Wi-Fi Cloud product has made it much easier for our limited IT staff to deploy new access points, to understand the functionality of the existing access points, and to understand the true needs of our guests. They've also streamlined backend operations by allowing our sales and visitor services forces to become more efficient when serving our customers." With WatchGuard, the museum is now Friendly Wi-Fi accredited, effectively blocking inappropriate and malicious web content from being accessed on-site, and providing invaluable peace of mind to the parents of the 140,000 students who visit the museum each year.

"The experience with WatchGuard has been a very pleasant one," reflected Hunter. "We're happy with the products, we're ecstatic about the level of support, and we've never had a difficulty that we couldn't solve on the security side with a WatchGuard product."

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ABOUT WATCHGUARD

WatchGuard® Technologies, Inc. is a global leader in network security, secure Wi-Fi, and network intelligence products and services to more than 75,000 customers worldwide. The company's mission is to make enterprise-grade security accessible to companies of all types and sizes through simplicity, making WatchGuard an ideal solution for Distributed Enterprises and SMBs. WatchGuard is headquartered in Seattle, Washington, with offices throughout North America, Europe, Asia Pacific, and Latin America. To learn more, visit WatchGuard.com.



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