

Liverpool Football Club Deploys “Premier” Xirrus Wi-Fi Network to Improve Fans’ Match-Day Experience



Record-Setting English Premier League Team Connects Fans Wirelessly at Historic Anfield Stadium, Enabling Real-Time App Engagement and Social Media Sharing on Multiple Mobile Devices.

Liverpool Football Club is one of the world’s most famous football clubs, having won eighteen League titles, seven FA Cups and a record 11 European titles. The club was formed in 1892, and plays at historic Anfield Stadium, which has been the home of the club since its formation.

Liverpool FC recently completed the first phase of Wi-Fi deployment across its two-tier, 12,000-seat Centenary Stand and adjoining corporate facilities, enabling fans to access and share digital content during games and communicate with other fans in the club in real time. With a successful first deployment in place, the club now has plans to deploy Xirrus Arrays throughout the stadium.

By offering Wi-Fi to its fans, the club has created an infrastructure that will allow fans to improve their overall match-day experience and encourage them to share the excitement of the game with the global Liverpool fan base. It has also created a new way for the club to gain insight and feedback from its fan base – highly valued information for improving services to fans and increasing fan loyalty.

Club Gives Fans Real-Time Communications Across Social Networks

According to club officials, the Wi-Fi deployment has not only improved connectivity, but has also provided a platform for new communications channels.

“Running our own data network based on Xirrus technology means we can provide our fans with a dedicated, robust and high-quality experience,” said Andrew Robinson, head of digital media and technology for the club. “The added reliability and performance of high-capacity Wi-Fi over 3G connections will encourage our fans to use social networks such as Twitter and Facebook to share their experiences with fans who are not in attendance at a game.”

Requirements

- Wireless coverage in the two tier, 12,000-seat Centenary Stand and adjoining corporate facilities, to enable fans to share match-day experiences
- Specialized, flexible, high-capacity wireless network to ensure a high-quality user experience for a very large number of concurrent users and devices
- Sign-in via a one-time registration process that encourages club members to communicate with each other during games
- Ability to learn which devices fans use to connect with the club, thereby providing information to help in planning investments in digital platforms
- Insights into how fans use the stadium and its facilities, allowing management to serve their needs
- Analytics that enable prioritization of key applications and the ability to connect more devices to the network by optimizing Wi-Fi spectrum usage

Solution

- Xirrus high-capacity Wi-Fi Arrays
- Application-level visibility and control to ensure that critical applications are delivered reliably over the wireless network
- Ubiquitous wireless network able to support custom services, including wayfinding and dynamic content delivery
- Over 4X the coverage and up to 8X the capacity of competitive solutions to deliver high-density wireless support – more than 1,000 users per Array

Benefits

- Delivers flawless wireless coverage to fans in the Centenary Stand and adjoining corporate facilities
- Enables fans to share commentary on the game with the global Liverpool fan base
- Allows the club to gain insights into fan behaviors and practices, in order to improve service to fans
- Seamless scalability to enable expansion of the network to accommodate new venues, applications, users and devices

Robinson continued: "A massive driver for this new network is that we can gain more insight into our fans than ever before. Sign-in will be via a one-time registration process using an email address, and fans will be encouraged to tell us their likes and dislikes. The technology will allow us to learn which devices fans are using to connect with the club, enabling us to invest in digital platforms appropriately. We will also find out more about how fans use the stadium and its facilities so that we can adapt these to better serve fans."

"The experience that we've created from day one is something we think fans will get very excited about. We'll be providing in-match stats, food and drink offers, access to online retail, in-play betting in partnership with Paddy Power and also the ability to engage with a global audience outside of the stadium through social media platforms."

Technology Equips Network Directors to Manage Conflicting Application Demands

Liverpool Football Club selected Xirrus not only for highly reliable connectivity, but also for the Wi-Fi network's ability to manage and prioritize the conflicting demands of varied applications on the network. Robinson explained: "We looked at a number of options, but decided to go with one of the leaders in this space. Xirrus combines a flexible range of wireless hardware solutions with the ability to handle huge capacity and bandwidth demands."

"Beyond that," he added, "Xirrus has innovative technology – called Application Control – that allows us to prioritize key applications and connect more devices to the network by optimizing Wi-Fi spectrum usage. These factors are critical to our long-term vision of providing our fans with the best match-day experience possible. But, more than that, the Xirrus platform is uniquely extensible, giving us the assurance that we will be able to support future applications that today may just be ideas on a napkin."

Sean Lerner, VP international at Xirrus, commented "This is not only a high-profile deployment for a prestigious sports organization, but it was also technically demanding. We're pleased that Liverpool FC has recognized Xirrus as its best option for Wi-Fi service. Stadiums such as Anfield require specialized, high-capacity wireless networks to ensure an outstanding experience for a very large number of concurrent users and devices."

Wireless Design Integration specialists WDSi Group, a Xirrus partner, designed, installed and commissioned the network, from the edge to the core. Chief operating officer Andrew Ramshaw said, "WDSi has deep experience in designing and deploying high-performance Wi-Fi networks and robust end-to-end digital solutions at stadiums around the world. Xirrus high-capacity Wi-Fi is an ideal solution for challenging environments such as stadium arenas. We look forward to seeing the fruition of this project and expanding the network in the near future."

The Xirrus Advantage

With the explosion of smartphones and tablets, mobility has become ubiquitous. People expect to connect wirelessly. Organizations depend on high-bandwidth to send and receive voice, video and data, from any device to anyone. And no one delivers better than Xirrus. Our Array-based solutions are unique. They draw from cellular tower design principles to provide wired-like reliability, increased user density and capacity, plus superior security. They perform under the most demanding conditions and have lower infrastructure requirements. When integrated with business and IT objectives, they help you do more than ever before.

At Xirrus, we apply the "best practices" of wired networking to wireless infrastructures by distributing the intelligence to the edge and outfitting the Array with dense multi-state radios in the same manner as a wired switch. That's how Xirrus delivers the best performing, most scalable wireless solutions in the industry. It's a strategic IT infrastructure advantage that fuels organizations. Because Xirrus does wireless networks right.

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