



Wireless Guest Networking Solutions for the BBC



New wireless guest networks, installed and managed by Building Zones, are transforming the experience of visitors to the BBC's Media Village site and the new Pacific Quay Scottish Headquarters.

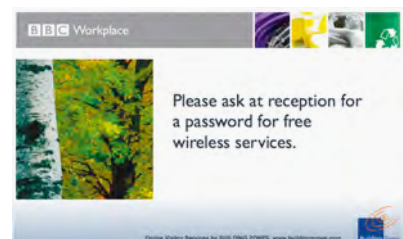
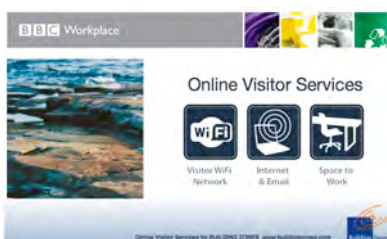
The two sites have been piloting the new technology with the aim of improving the experience of staff, consultants, freelancers, service partners and other organisations working with the BBC. The desired benefits were an increase in space utilisation and improved collaboration between the BBC and its external service providers.

The Media Village is on the former White City Stadium site which has a rich history as the venue for the 1908 Olympic Games. Today, its Media Centre plays host to some 5,000 staff and visitors a day, and this is set to rise to 6,500 by the end of 2008.

The site houses some shops and cafes centred round a main landscaped public boulevard and is intended to support urban regeneration, for the benefit of staff, local residents and visitors alike.

Building Zones have been working with the BBC and their technology partner Siemens to provide wireless networking facilities for visitors to the Media Village, as well as to the BBC's new complex in Glasgow's Pacific Quay. The new guest network facility allows visitors to use laptops, mobiles and other portable devices to work remotely when they visit the two BBC sites, without compromising the BBC's information security.

"The BBC is a public organisation that's trying to provide best value in terms of using its space in a more effective way. The guest networks demonstrate that we are doing so wherever we can, allowing our staff, partners, freelancers and consultants to access online services and to work in alternative work settings where they can work, think, collaborate and relax," said Tony Bryan, BBC Workplace Innovation Leader.





The aim: workplace innovation

BBC Workplace wanted to offer staff, service partners, freelancers and other visitors to the Media Village the chance to work online in a flexible, open environment.

At the same time, they wanted to improve the use of space in the coffee bar and restaurant adjacent to the main entrance to the site.

Tony Bryan explained: "The BBC is always seeking to use its workplace in better ways. We wanted to create a space where users could sit down with a cup of coffee or meet over a meal, but at the same time be able to work effectively, using the internet and online services in the same way they could in their own office."

The new 'Wireless @ Network Central' visitor area in the White City building was opened in November 2007, and has already accumulated over 250 user sessions, or over 3,000 hours online.

Managing risk

Information security is a major consideration for the BBC. According to Norman Hitch of Siemens, "the BBC's Information Security unit was concerned about any form of public access network. It is very important to this project that we maintain the highest security standards,

and a traditional WLAN would not have provided a strong enough partition."

Building Zones offered an ideal solution: a fully wireless guest network run completely separately from the BBC's own internal network and hosted and maintained on a dedicated, off-site Building Zones server.

Running the two networks independently in this way minimises any risk to information security. Building Zones provide the access points, power and interface into an ADSL connection, all of which are managed remotely. Client log-ins and identification and a full-service support line are also provided and managed by Building Zones.



Digital Signage

Installation of the guest network took around a month, with the Building Zones team working closely with the BBC Workplace and with Siemens to agree the footprint of the network area and to ensure that WiFi points and new cabling would be fully compatible with the BBC's own network infrastructure.

Flexible approach; creative solutions

Building Zones collaborated with BBC Workplace and with Siemens throughout the specification for the network in order to make sure it was tailored to meet the exact needs of the site.



This flexible approach was demonstrated during the course of the project, when BBC Workplace identified the need for signage and display materials to advertise the new service. They wanted a high tech, low-cost solution which would complement and enhance the new, improved user space.

Building Zones recommended eye-catching wireless digital picture frames on which rotating images or text can be used not only to advertise the guest network service but to promote any other messages or information to visitors to the site.

“Building Zones really listen to what you want. Other companies just offer a standard, rigid rollout service. But Building Zones get what you want and are prepared to think creatively about the challenges of each individual project. It’s been a really good partnership between the BBC Workplace, Building Zones and Siemens,” commented Tony Bryan.

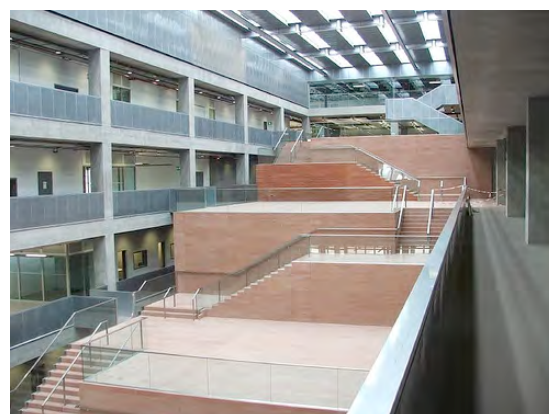
A workspace for the future

The guest networks at White City and Pacific Quay are currently averaging around 300 users a month, and the BBC predicts this will rise significantly over the next few months. Use of space at the Media Village has been enhanced, with the cafe and entrance areas altered to accommodate up to 24 visitors working at the ‘breakfast bar’ area, as well as those using the restaurant and seating nearby. Feedback from visitors and from staff involved in the project has been positive.

With the success of the two pilots at Media Village and at Pacific Quay, the BBC

will consider developing a framework contract with Siemens & Building Zones to roll out the guest network installations to other sites in future.

According to Building Zones Managing Director George Bartley; “Our focus is on using new and emerging technologies to enhance the use of buildings and spaces, and to improve the way in which people work. In 1995 we helped build the world’s first wireless office, and we continue to lead the field in combining emerging technologies with cutting edge workplace solutions, tailored to each individual client”.



BBC Pacific