



Pittsburgh International Airport

Improving Customer Service through a Traveler-Friendly Wireless Secure Network

The Pittsburgh International Airport (PIT) is a world-class facility that accommodates nearly 20 million travelers on nearly 450,000 aircraft operations per year. The Allegheny County Airport Authority operates and manages the Pittsburgh International Airport and Allegheny County Airport.

Industry:

Transportation

Challenge:

Deploying powerful, cost-effective wireless access to enhance airport services

Solution:

Secure, standards-based wireless LAN that's easy to set up, easier to maintain

Benefits:

- Provides cost-effective wireless connectivity to busy travelers from anywhere in the airport
- Enables PIT to be the only U.S. airport to offer free wireless network service
- “Plug-and-play”-like set up ensures fast deployment without a lot of technical support
- Extends policy-based management to the wireless edge, creating a highly secure, enterprise-wide network serving travelers, vendors and staff
- High capacity to handle demanding and diverse network traffic
- Increased network accessibility and flexibility ensures greater convenience, customer satisfaction
- Scalability and modularity of the design accommodates constant change, quickly and easily
- Standards-based performance ensures interoperability with multivendor equipment, protect investments

With more than 600 non-stop flights per day to 118 destinations, PIT is served by more than 20 air carriers as well as being US Airways largest hub. PIT has been frequently recognized for its quality in meeting traveler's needs. The OAG (Official Airline Guide) Worldwide recently listed the facility on its short list of the world's best airports for the second year in a row.

The Challenge:**Deploying powerful, cost-effective wireless access to enhance airport services**

Since its inception more than 10 years ago, the Pittsburgh International Airport has always put a premium on airline safety and security. But superior customer service has also been a longstanding staple of its operation. In fact, just recently, JD Power and Associates named PIT number two in mid-sized airports in its customer satisfaction survey. And Conde Nast Traveler's Magazine named PIT number one in the United States and number three in the world in its “People’s Choice Award.”

In an effort to continue this tradition of excellence, PIT looked to expand its airport services through technology to include wireless network access to support travelers’ laptops and PDAs. But while other airports around the country have taken similar initiatives, the Pittsburgh Airport wanted to take wireless to a whole new level: offering it free of charge to all airport patrons.

According to Tony Gialloreto, network and systems manager for PIT, the reason behind the complimentary wireless access made sense; the challenge was pulling it off without taxing an already tight IT budget. “By offering our customers this free wireless service we obviously enhance their experience at the airport, but at the same time, it had to make sense from an economical and operational standpoint,” said Gialloreto.

Fortunately for Gialloreto and his staff, the airport already had a successful partnership with Enterasys Networks and could leverage

its existing infrastructure to implement a secure wireless solution, quickly and easily.

The Solution:

Secure, standards-based wireless LAN that's easy to set up, easier to maintain

Typically when airports pursue a wireless project, they must bring in consultants to conduct an in-depth site study and then recommend a comprehensive plan of action. This is not only an expensive route, but extremely time consuming—and not

the path Gialloreto wanted to follow. Instead, he opted to complete the project in house with assistance from his network vendor Enterasys Networks and reseller partner PC Solutions.

PIT had a great deal of experience in working with Enterasys since the airport's network infrastructure was standardized on Enterasys equipment. "We've enjoyed the performance, security and manageability of the Enterasys switches and routers from the very beginning so it was no great leap to turn to them for a wireless solution," explained Gialloreto.

After meeting with Enterasys and PC Solutions, and seeing the advanced capabilities of the award-winning RoamAbout™ wireless LAN, Gialloreto was even more confident that the project could be completed in a timely and efficient manner. "We knew RoamAbout was among the best in its class in performance, but the real key is how easy it is to install, configure and manage. We had the entire wireless network up and running in less than two weeks!"

The new network currently consists of several Enterasys RoamAbout R2 access points strategically placed in food courts and concourses throughout the airport. The wireless component of the airport's network is tied back to the secure wired infrastructure that includes Enterasys Matrix™ E1 and E7 switches as well as a 10/100 Gigabit backbone. NetSight™ Atlas network management provides centralized monitoring and control of the entire enterprise. By leveraging Enterasys' Secure Networks™ architecture, PIT can dynamically allocate and enforce user and security policies—over both wired and wireless connections—for travelers, vendors, airport staff and senior management.

For busy travelers, the 802.11b-compliant Enterasys wireless network provides secure Internet connections at speeds as fast or faster than many broadband services. And best of all, it doesn't cost a cent. For PIT, the solution is flexible and scalable. "Enterasys provided us with an airtight wired/wireless infrastructure that is cost-effective and will be easy to upgrade. For our small IT staff, that kind of straightforward set up and intuitive management is critical," said Gialloreto.

In addition, because security is integrated in all the Enterasys equipment, PIT has peace of mind knowing its integrated Secure Network solution provides the highest level of protection from the core all the way out to the wireless access points.

The Future:

Building on a successful partnership to include new advancements in transportation communications

With the wireless project complete (and earning praise from appreciative airport travelers and employees alike), PIT is now turning its attention to an Flight Information Display System (FIDS) that will enable visitors to immediately check the status of their flights anywhere in the airport, regardless of carrier. This exciting endeavor will consolidate critical, real-time information under one centralized system managed by the airport.

Gialloreto is optimistic that the Enterasys infrastructure already in place has the bandwidth and built-in intelligence to handle such a powerful application. "With the performance and reliability we've enjoyed thus far with the Enterasys network, there's no reason to believe it won't support our FIDS initiative." Pittsburgh travelers can expect this new advancement in customer service to be up and ready in mid-2004.

Contact Us

For more information, call Enterasys Networks toll free at **1-877-801-7082**,
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