

Case Study: DreamWorks Animation

Aruba Gigabit Wi-Fi enables artists to create and collaborate anywhere across 11-acre campus.



Whether an artist wants to sketch outdoors in the shade of a tree or brainstorm with colleagues in a common space, it's Keith McKay's responsibility to ensure they're equipped with sufficient Wi-Fi.

"Attracting the best artists requires meeting their mobility expectations," says McKay, Network Operations

Supervisor at DreamWorks Animation. "With DreamWorks Animation's applications requiring more resources and employees seeking access anywhere on campus, the studio's existing wireless infrastructure couldn't sufficiently scale up."

Award-Winning Studio Chooses Aruba

To meet mobile-first employee demands, DreamWorks Animation determined its legacy wireless couldn't sufficiently cover its 11-acre campus in Glendale, CA with speedy, robust indoor and outdoor Wi-Fi.



In addition, the Computer-Generated (CG) animation studio wanted to extend off-site creativity and collaboration by offering secure Wi-Fi to remote offices.



REQUIREMENTS

- Campus-wide high-density, high-performance Wi-Fi
- Strong, role-based security
- Scalable as the studio's business needs evolve

SOLUTION

- [802.11ac Wave 1 & Wave 2 Indoor & Outdoor APs](#)
- [7200 Series Mobility Controllers](#)
- [5400R and 3810 Series Switches](#)
- [ClearPass](#) for access control
- [AirWave](#) with Clarity for network management

BENEFITS

- Artists create and collaborate anywhere across 11-acre campus with Gigabit Wi-Fi.
- Reduced Wi-Fi complaints from dozens per week to none.
- Streamlines wireless and wired security with smart policy enforcement and role-based access.

DreamWorks Animation thoroughly evaluated several wireless infrastructure options. Ultimately, the studio selected a comprehensive solution from Aruba, a Hewlett Packard Enterprise company.

“We chose Aruba, because it provides the most complete solution for meeting employee expectations along with the best support,” McKay says. “It also enables us to incorporate wayfinding and other mobile engagement tools as our modernization continues.”

- Supports scalability as needs increase with integrated multi-gigabit technology.
- Enables adoption of Aruba Mobile Engagement, including Meridian App Platform and Beacons.

Expanding Campus Connectivity

DreamWorks Animation’s new speedy and secure Wi-Fi turns every location on campus into a viable workspace.

“In an artistic community like ours, high-performance mobile connectivity enables employees to work wherever they create best, whether that’s inside an office or outdoors next to our waterfall,” McKay says. “We’ve also enhanced impromptu collaborations, as groups can now use any space on campus – rather than wait for a meeting room to become available.”



Peaking 2,500 connected devices with ease

In IT, the benefits not only include stronger security and streamlined management, but also fewer help desk calls, despite peak loads of 2,500 devices.

“As our previous solution was unable to keep pace with the increasing bandwidth requirements of our animation applications, we fielded dozens of issues every week,” McKay says. “As soon as we rolled out the new Wi-Fi, that dropped to none.”

Speedy, Reliable Wi-Fi Solution Empowers

Artists

DreamWorks Animation credits Aruba's wire-speed 802.11ac indoor and outdoor access points (APs), plus high-performance mobility controllers, with supplying the fast and reliable Wi-Fi employees expect.

In addition, the studio values the integration of Bluetooth Low Energy (BLE) beacon technology into Aruba's latest Wave 2 APs. This simplifies the management and deployment of Aruba Beacons for mobile engagement.

"As the studio plans to increase mobile engagement, it was natural to choose a solution that supports our build-out strategy," McKay says.

Unifying wired and wireless for scalability and flexibility

With our new Aruba Gigabit Wi-Fi infrastructure, including HPE Smart Rate multi-gig uplinks, we're not only meeting employee expectations, but we're also positioned to provide multi-gigabit bandwidth in the future without the disruption and expense of upgrading cable.

KEITH MCKAY, *NETWORK OPERATIONS SUPERVISOR, DREAMWORKS ANIMATION* ,

DreamWorks Animation leverages Aruba's campus and edge switches for connecting wireless traffic to the wired network. Due to their advanced programmability and wired network interoperability, the switches enable streamlined unification of wireless and wired networks.

The studio values the scalability and flexibility of Aruba's modular switches. "Standardizing on Aruba's PoE+ switches ensures we can plug in anything, whether it's a phone, an AP or a workstation," McKay says. "The ability to upgrade switches, versus forklift upgrades, is key to supplying our users with high-performance connectivity as needs change."

Future-proofing with HPE Smart Rate

As rendering and other animation technologies demand greater bandwidth, DreamWorks Animation will be prepared due to the HPE Smart Rate multi-gigabit Ethernet technology available in Aruba's latest APs and switches. This innovation automatically ensures up to 10Gbps wireless connectivity.

"With HPE Smart Rate integrated into Aruba solutions, we're positioned for multi-gigabit without the disruption and expense of upgrading cable," McKay says.

Aruba ClearPass – the Gold Standard for Enterprise Access Control

Enterprise Access Control is maintained through an extension to role-based access control (RBAC) with a per device policy. Utilizing ClearPass is a significant step forward at DreamWorks Animation. This technology is critical for visibility as well as securing employees' mixture of bring your own device (BYOD) and corporate-issued devices.

"Aruba got NAC and role-based access control right with ClearPass," McKay says.

Smart policies enforced across wired and wireless networks

By replacing DreamWorks Animation's legacy AAA with context-aware policies for strong security, ClearPass is solving the studio's security challenges across both its wired and wireless networks. It delivers visibility, policy control and workflow automation in one cohesive solution.

"ClearPass' built-in profiling engine collects real-time data and classifies all devices that connect to our network," McKay says. "Then, the solution automatically grants or denies user access privileges by applying smart policies."

"If a device is unknown, it's quarantined until we can resolve any latent issues," he adds.

Unlimited guest access while maintaining strong security

Maintaining strong security while providing unlimited guest access is another feature of ClearPass.

"With ClearPass, campus visitors can join the guest network to access the Internet, which keeps the guest traffic completely separated from the studio's internal systems," McKay says.

AirWave Provides Deeper Insights for Optimized Wi-Fi

For the granular visibility and predictive analytics needed to optimize Wi-Fi experiences, DreamWorks Animation relies on AirWave and the Clarity module to quickly diagnose and resolve issues before users are impacted.

The studio also leverages AirWave's AppRF feature for regulating application access. "With granular app control, we can protect business-critical traffic," McKay says. "Downtime isn't an option for us. Any network interruption can impact the studio's business outcome."

Wi-Fi Enables New Initiatives

With its robust Wi-Fi infrastructure in place, DreamWorks Animation is now turning to various related initiatives.

Among other things, this includes updating telephony to UC and deploying Aruba's compact hospitality/dorm APs to employee residences.

Evolving to Meet Artist Needs

Most importantly, DreamWorks Animation can continue evolving its Wi-Fi infrastructure to offer artists more mobility and workspace flexibility as employee preferences unfold.

"Ultimately, it doesn't matter which device users have or where they're located – indoors, outdoors or even from a remote workspace," McKay says. "It's simply connect and create."