Cambium Networks™

Barcelona International Convention Center Sets Up Event Wi-Fi Three Times Faster With Xirrus Wi-Fi

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JOAN CHALER,
OPERATIONS DIRECTOR, GL EVENTS CCIB,
BARCELONA INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION
CENTER

Overview

LOCATED BY THE MEDITERRANEAN SHORE, El Centre de Convencions Internacional de Barcelona (CCIB) is the largest convention center in Southern Europe. The 100,000-square-meter (more than 1 million square feet) venue offers 45 meeting rooms, a 3,200-seat forum and a single space accommodating up to 15,000 people. CCIB hosts approximately 125 events every year.

"Wi-Fi has become very important to event organizers because it's important to their guests," says Joan Chaler, operations director for CCIB. Approximately 90% of the people attending CCIB events live outside of Spain. Wi-Fi saves them from having to pay their service provider's cellular roaming charges and is also faster.

CCIB had built its previous Wi-Fi network in 2004 when people had much different Wi-Fi habits. At that time, most guests brought only one mobile device, didn't expect to always stay connected and rarely streamed video. "Habits have changed a lot in a short time and our old network had become non-usable," says Chaler. "We wanted a new Wi-Fi network that gave us a competitive advantage."

Quick Setup for the Next Event

CCIB COMPARED LEADING WI-FI SOLUTIONS for reliable performance in high-density environments and quick set up for the next event. The winner: Xirrus Wi-Fi.

"Every event is unique, and Xirrus is by far the easiest Wi-Fi solution to set up for each customer's requirements," says Jordi Gay, IT manager for CCIB. With the old network, putting up and taking down access points (AP) for an event with thousands of guests typically took a full day. "With Xirrus, we can set up Wi-Fi for the next event in about one-third the time — it's ready by noon," says Gay. CCIB needs fewer APs and less cabling to provide the same coverage. Less time needed to set up Wi-Fi also means the room is ready sooner, increasing revenue potential.

Application Control Based on Each Event's Requirements

CCIB GUESTS ENJOY A CONSISTENTLY GOOD USER EXPERIENCE, even in crowded areas. Up to 3,000 people have connected to the network at the same time.
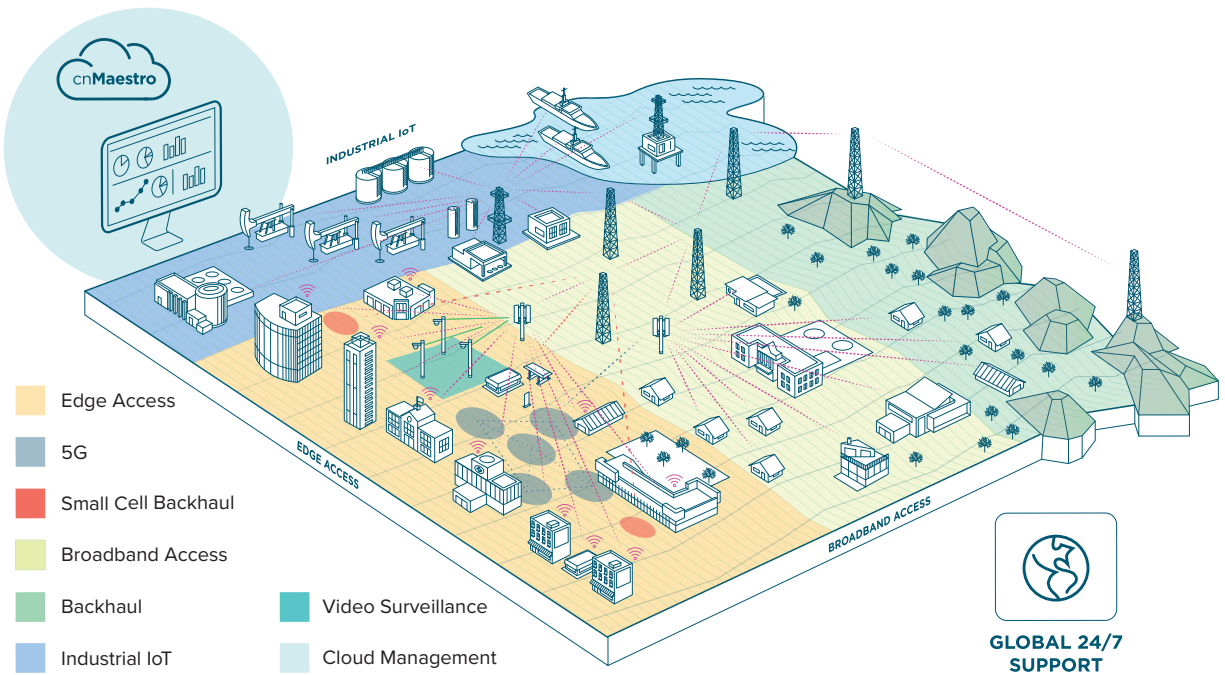
When meeting with potential customers, CCIB representatives ask if they want to give priority to certain applications, such as voice over IP, or to limit per-user bandwidth. The IT team meets these requests with a few clicks in the Xirrus Management System (XMS) interface.

"Saying yes to requests for application control helps us win more business," says Chaler. CCIB also offers to provide customers with reports that show which websites guests are visiting — valuable information for advertising and event publicity.

"Our corporate clients who come back to CCIB year after year tell us the reason is not just the location, but also our IT services," Chaler says. "XMS helps to set us apart."

Longer Investment Life, From Software-Programmable Radios

NEWER LAPTOPS AND MOBILE DEVICES can connect to either 5 GHz or 2.4 GHz radios. Providing enough 5 GHz radios makes the experience better for everyone — whether they have a new or older device — because the 5 GHz band has more usable channels. CCIB's IT team knows from XMS reports that far more than half of its guests now have 5 GHz-capable devices. "As the proportion of 5 GHz devices continues to grow, we'll reprogram more of our radios to operate in the 5 GHz band — with a few mouse clicks," Gay says. The IT team will also upgrade some radios from the 802.11n to the faster 802.11ac standard. This upgrade, too, requires only a mouse click. Software upgrades eliminate the cost of new APs.

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5G
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Cambium Networks' Gigabit wireless solutions enable municipal, enterprise and service provider operators to tailor connectivity to meet exact requirements and grow as needs evolve.

Adapting to Evolving Wi-Fi Habits and Standards

AS EVENT ATTENDEES BEGIN USING MORE and new kinds of wireless devices, including wearables, CCIB will add more radios to its existing Xirrus APs. Setting up for events will be just as fast because the additional radios fit in the same number of APs.

Chaler concludes, "Xirrus helps us provide an excellent Wi-Fi experience at any type of event because it's easy to install, easy to expand and easy to manage. When we had our old Wi-Fi network, I used to be scared about costs when Jordi told me he had to upgrade the equipment. Now, I'm at ease because we can upgrade our Xirrus networks with a few mouse clicks."