

Cisco helps Swiss national broadcaster transform efficiency, cost and productivity for remote location broadcasting



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
CUSTOMER NAME · SRG SSR idée suisse
LOCATION · Zurich, Switzerland
INDUSTRY · Media
COMPANY SIZE · 5,800 employees
BUSINESS CHALLENGE · High cost of communicating broadcast content from international events · Slow and complex to transfer video images back to Switzerland · Inefficient access to resources for location staff
NETWORK SOLUTION · Cisco Wide Area Application Services (WAAS) · Cisco Unified Communications
BUSINESS VALUE · Ensures customers get content from international events specific to Switzerland in real time · Slashes the cost of video file transfer internationally by more than 80 percent · Delivers a return on investment within months · Allows latest broadcast production technology and techniques to be used even in remote, temporary locations · Makes location-based staff more productive by giving them LAN-like performance at remote, temporary offices

SRG SSR, the Swiss national TV and radio broadcaster, is using a Cisco data center networking solution to increase productivity and slash the cost of broadcasting video content from international events.

Business Challenge

SRG SSR is the national broadcast organisation for Switzerland. It is a not-for-profit organization and operates under a Swiss Federal Constitution charter to provide a range of broadcast services. These are sixteen radio channels, seven television channels and complementary websites and teletext services each covering the four different languages spoken in Switzerland. SRG SSR derives around 70 percent of its revenues from license fees and the rest from commercial activities.

One of the problems facing SRG SSR was the cost, complexity and time to send broadcast material from international events, such as the 2008 Beijing Olympics and the FIFA World Cup in South Africa in 2010, back to Switzerland. SRG SSR faced a 30 millisecond delay from transferring a video from the UEFA Euro2008 final in Vienna and a 200-400 millisecond delay for the Olympics in China. This meant video files of several gigabytes taking two to three hours to transfer. In effect, a post-match interview with the manager and key players would be too late. SRG SSR did have one solution – renting a dedicated video network from each international event to transfer video back to Switzerland. It requires engineers at each end to send and received the data. SRG SSR turned to its strategic network partner, Cisco and Cisco Gold Certified Partner Nextiraone, for a more efficient and cost effective solution.



Network Solution

For the 2007 ski-ing world championships in Sweden, Cisco provided SRG SSR with a pilot solution using Cisco Wide Area Application Services (WAAS), which is an application acceleration and Wide Area Network (WAN) optimization solution for the remote locations. This is a key part of Cisco's Data Center 3.0 strategy to help SRG SSR transform its data center architecture to bring virtualized resources and operational efficiency benefits to the business.

Because of the success of the pilot, SRG SSR has now developed a mobile Cisco WAAS solution which it can set up at any international event. At such events, SRG SSR has its own TV studio and communications center which now includes Cisco WAAS. Video files, such as a post-match interview done in one of the Swiss native languages, can be

transferred back to SRG SSR's data center in Zurich and then out to one of the company's six other data centers which serve the different language regions.

In addition, the mobile Cisco WAAS solution at an international event also supports other applications such as file transfer and email that staff use while on location. This includes telephone extensions as part of SRG SSR's Cisco Unified Communications system comprising several hundred Cisco Unified IP handsets located around the business in Switzerland.

The Cisco WAAS integrates with SRG SSR's Cisco network infrastructure comprising a Cisco WAN connecting up seven regional centers where SRG SSR has deployed Cisco Local Area Networks (LANs). As well as using the Cisco infrastructure for transferring broadcast video and audio data and standard business applications, it also supports a Cisco Unified Communications system.

The Cisco data center solution at SRG SSR has been developed and implemented by Nextiraone. "We have a strong relationship with Nextiraone which proved effective for the Cisco WAAS deployment. We found the advice and expertise provided by Nextiraone was very useful and practical because the company had first hand knowledge from deploying Cisco WAAS to improve data communication for its own offices remote offices," says Florian Sutz, network architect for WAN at SRG SSR.

“The WAAS solution is very important for SRG SSR because we can move all of our remote location operations to file-based video production which is more efficient and the way broadcast industry technology is moving. Effectively, this means we use the same, modern production methods and technology that we use in our studios in Switzerland, at any location, anywhere in the world. The Cisco solution also means we can do this over long-distance line, international lines which we just couldn't do before.”

Florian Sutz, Network Architect for WAN, SRG SSR

Business Results

The Cisco WAAS solution has helped SRG SSR to reduce costs, accelerate application performance, improve productivity and gain rapid return on investment.

For the cost of the Cisco WAAS solution – which can be used repeatedly at different international events – SRG SSR expects to save as much as 80 percent of the cost of renting a dedicated video network solution for a single event. Not only that, Cisco WAAS increases the speed of transferring terabytes of video data by 10 times. This means that video material – such as an interview with a Swiss competitor – can be sent back from any international event in near real time over standard Internet connections.

The Cisco WAAS has also help improve productivity and the working environment for staff while on location. Cisco WAAS effectively turns the temporary location office into an extension of SRG SSR's home WAN. It is easier for staff to work because they no longer need to select and download files they might need to laptops before going on location. Staff have access to files and applications as if they were in an SRG SSR office in Switzerland.

PRODUCT LIST

Routing and Switching

- Cisco 7600 Series Routers
- Cisco Catalyst 3750 Series Switches

Application Networking

- Cisco Wide Area Application Services (WAAS) Software
- Cisco Wide Area Application Engine (WAE) Appliances

Voice and IP Communications

- Cisco Unified Communications Manager (CallManager)
- Cisco Unified IP Phones 7900 Series

Cisco WAAS has also significantly speeded up email communications. One problem that faced SRG SSR while out on location was the time it took to send emails. Depending on the size of an email, it could take between 30 seconds and several minutes and while sending the individual's computer could not be used. With Cisco WAAS, sending emails is now virtually instant, further improving working conditions for location staff.

Cisco WAAS also removes the need for many IT management functions such as back up and security at the remote location because all data files and applications reside at one of SRG SSR's data centers Switzerland instead of being on a server at the event.

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