

CARDIFF CENTRAL RAILWAY STATION

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PROFILE

Over 13 million passengers pass through Cardiff Central Station each year, making it the largest in Wales and one of the busiest in the UK. The Grade II Listed station is managed by Arriva Trains and is a vital interchange between Wales and England.

GOAL

- Offer free-to-use WiFi to travellers
- Client branded login User Experience Portal (UEP)
- Support for thousands of concurrent users
- Multi-lingual portal (English and Welsh)
- Adaptive to all mobile devices
- All data owned solely by Arriva Trains
- Secure content filtering
- 24/7 UK-based customer and client support service

RESULT

In a connected world, travelling can be a frustrating experience. No one likes playing hunt the hotspot, whether they need to check a vital business e-mail or simply find directions to their destination. Travellers are increasingly expecting connectivity at all stages of their journey. Arriva Trains is now able to offer free public WiFi at Cardiff Central, giving travellers a chance to get online for free with no fuss or hassle.

“Striking the balance between ease of use and providing relevant information through the User Experience Portal was key to ensure this project was a success from both a traveller and data collection angle”

Oliver Malkin
Marketing & Communications
WiFi SPARK

CUSTOMER PROFILE

Cardiff is the beating heart of Wales and has gained a reputation as a thriving modern city. As well as the National Assembly for Wales, the city is home to the Millennium Stadium and the Cardiff Bay regeneration project. Cardiff Central Station is a bustling interchange, connecting South and West Wales with the rest of the UK. It is one of the busiest stations in the UK, with over 13 million travellers passing through in 2014. The Grade II Listed building was opened in 1850 and is owned and managed by Arriva Trains.

GOAL

Train travel has changed since the days of freezing cold waiting rooms, stale sausage rolls and luke warm tea. Stations now boast high street shops and comfy cafes. Travellers expect WiFi connection at every stage of their journey. Arriva Trains wanted to further improve what Cardiff Station offered by installing a free WiFi service so that travellers could easily check e-mails, catch up with friends and family on social media or simply look up travel information.

With a wealth of experience in creating public WiFi networks, as well as an understanding of working in architecturally sensitive buildings, WiFi SPARK was the logical choice for this project. WiFi SPARK created an Arriva branded User Experience Portal (UEP) providing direct customer access, along with a filter to ensure the system was not used to access inappropriate content. The UEP is configured to react to whichever device the user has, making the process simple to navigate. It also remembers the customer and logs them in automatically the next time they visit.

WiFi SPARK has its own UK-based 24/7 support desk for customers and the client, and monitoring systems that will identify problems before they escalate. This provides peace of mind and takes responsibility of running the system away from Arriva Trains. Needless to say, the system is fully compliant with legal requirements.

SOLUTION

The first part of the project was to fit a strategic number of high quality Cisco brand access points across all of the station's public areas, including shops, waiting rooms and coffee shops. With this done, the SPARK® Gateway was installed on the network, to manage traffic and direct it to the Arriva Trains branded customer portal (UEP). The portal displays a simple registration form, which just requires a few details from the customer. It also has useful information for travellers, telling them about station facilities, train timetables and providing a link to the ticket booking service. As Cardiff Central is a gateway station to Wales, the portal is bi-lingual.

The SPARK® Gateway provides extensive reporting and analysis for Arriva Trains, as well as a marketing API feed, which sends data in real time to their Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system. Arriva exclusively own any data gathered by the system; it does not belong to WiFi SPARK or any other third party. This data can then be used by Arriva to enhance their marketing and promotional activities.

As a result, the millions of travellers passing through Cardiff Central every year can enjoy hassle free WiFi with their latte.

