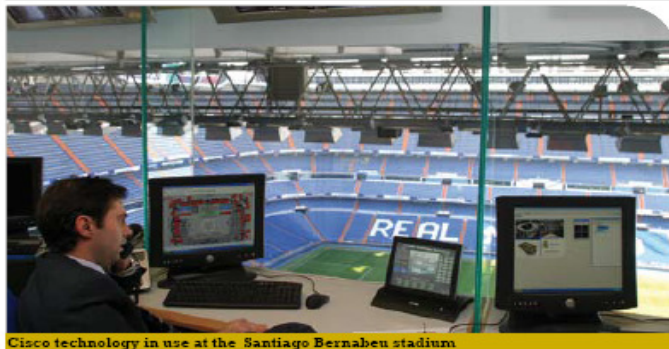


Article Title: The Virtual World can be harnessed to share best practice within the industry

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NETWORKS PRODUCTS & SERVICES



Cisco technology in use at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium

Fair share: The virtual world can be harnessed to share best practice within the industry

It is becoming increasingly usual to find empty seats at the start of an important sports event in a stadium. The reason is quite simple – consumers have a huge variety of leisure options open to them. This choice is not limited to content, but extends to where and how to enjoy this content – in person, online, through mobile devices, video devices or other formats. As the reach of the internet has extended, consumers can now access content from anywhere in the world.

Teams with iconic brands, such as Manchester United, have supporters from all over the world and can therefore make use of the web to engage them in the brand. Using the internet, the team can also share its experience to help other clubs to develop growth strategies. Virtual communities such as the one powered by Cisco through the internet (www.2degreesnetwork.com) encourage clubs to improve their end service, providing them with a business opportunity whilst fighting against climate change (the 2degrees network has a particular focus on green practices).

The 2degrees network was developed to harness the internet to guide teams (or even sports leagues) in the search for new

solutions and tools to provide them with a competitive advantage, while also promoting a more sustainable and fair environment. These virtual communities enable people within the industry to 'meet' and share ideas and experiences.

Advances in technology are also being used to enhance the fan experience in the stadium itself. Sports clubs may build a new stadium to increase leisure options for their supporters and showcase the brand. Although the changes to the stadium can entail high costs and an increase in the ticket price, the owners have the chance to enrich the fan experience and offer other non-sports events. Satisfying the varied leisure needs of supporters can help them identify with the brand and feel involved.

Fan experience

Technology plays a critical role, as it becomes a decisive factor in transforming the fan's experience. Cisco technology helps teams manage and access key information to make decisions in real time on everything that is going on at the stadium. All the stadium's arteries can be controlled via Cisco's IP technology, from a single computer. From

a central point (even remotely) the PA system, turnstiles, lights, temperature and surveillance can be controlled at each event.

If a club makes best use of these technologies the stadium can become a worldwide reference point, such as the Santiago Bernabéu Stadium in Madrid, Spain, or the Commerzbank Arena in Frankfurt, Germany. However, some clubs redesign their stadium without planning meticulously and therefore simply end up with a problematic site in terms of safety and even power consumption.

Virtual community

Through diverse initiatives such as the virtual community powered by Cisco, worldwide experts with multidisciplinary profiles are already developing innovative and sustainable projects. The aim is to boost business collaboration by making use of new technologies and enabling the growth of the network, to then help other teams create sustainable and fully equipped stadiums for all sorts of heavily attended events. On the 2degrees website, Cisco professionals collaborate with other participants to create a common space where they share ideas, experiences and boost professional relations to provide architects with inventive and sustainable solutions when designing large sports centres.

In addition to specialised articles on sustainability and web technology for this type of building, Cisco's virtual community enables users to access forums and blogs to share their knowledge and use new tools. Cisco is using the web to unite manufacturers, technology department managers working with team owners, power companies, transport specialists and members of consulting companies that support these industries. Thus, the internet becomes a source of information where sports clubs can find solutions and tools to optimise their facilities and create a pleasant experience for fans at the stadium.

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