NBC Unveils New Videoscape Experience for Olympic Games

Customer Name:
NBC

Industry:
Media and Broadcasting

Location:
New York City and Los Angeles

Number of Employees:
34,000

Challenge
As the U.S. broadcaster for the Olympic Games, NBC strives to bring the Olympics experience to viewers in new and innovative ways. Over the past several Games, the award-winning TV network has set a new standard for bringing users close to the action, delivering thousands of hours of live coverage, highlights, and behind-the-scenes footage to multiple screens: TVs, PCs, smartphones, and tablets. Now, NBC wants to enhance the coverage once again for the 2012 Summer Olympic Games in London, and give users a personalized Olympics experience, unlike anything they have seen before.

Transformation
NBC is using Cisco® Videoscape technology to give select users at Olympic event venues and pavilions a glimpse into the future of sports media coverage. NBC is providing a personalized multi-screen experience, including six live TV channels and hundreds of hours of on-demand Olympics coverage, streamed to users’ smartphones and tablets. Users will be able to search across all live and on-demand content, and pause and record live TV in the cloud for the duration of the games. They will also enjoy a new, interactive Olympics experience, with the ability to experience synchronized content such as event results, medal counts, athlete bios, and more from their tablets and smartphones as they watch the action unfold.

Cisco Solution
Cisco Videoscape reinvents the TV experience for broadcasters such as NBC, service providers, and viewers. It combines real-time intelligence across the cloud, network, and clients to deliver any kind of content, to any device, anywhere. And, it draws on advanced video delivery capabilities to provide a level of quality, personalization, and interactivity that conventional cloud video services cannot match. NBC has long relied on Cisco media technologies to help bring Olympics coverage to viewers. Now, NBC is using Cisco Videoscape to push the boundaries once again, and change the way that viewers can experience the Olympic Games.
NBC Unveils Videoscape Experience for Olympic Games

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Customer Name: NBC
Industry: Media and Broadcasting
Location: United States
Number of Employees: 34,000

Challenge:
NBC wanted to bring select viewers a new kind of Olympic Games experience, and provide a glimpse into the future of major sports coverage.

Solution:
The U.S. television network is using Cisco Videoscape to reinvent the Olympic Games experience. Users will be able to access all of NBC’s live coverage, as well as hundreds of hours of additional content from their smartphones and tablets through the duration of the games. Users will also be able to pause and record Olympic video in the cloud, and access next-generation interactive applications on their companion devices, synchronized with the TV.

Results:
With Cisco Videoscape, NBC is giving users a personalized, interactive multi-screen Olympics experience unlike anything they have seen before.

Challenge
NBC, the U.S. broadcaster for the Olympic Games, strives to bring the Olympics experience to viewers in new ways and push the boundaries of sports broadcasting. Along these lines, NBC has been bringing Olympic Games video to new screens and viewing devices.

“The ability to stream content anywhere, anytime, to any digital device, has become key to our success and growth in the broadcasting business,” says Craig Lau, vice president of Information Technology for NBC Olympics. “It’s extended to the Internet and also digital portable platforms that are in place today, or will be invented tomorrow.”

Over the past three Olympic Games, NBC dramatically expanded its online and multi-screen coverage of the action. During the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympic Games, for example, the network made literally thousands of hours of live event action, encores, rewinds, and behind-the-scenes footage available for the first time to viewers using PCs, smartphones, and tablets. As NBC prepared for the 2012 London Summer Olympic Games, however, the question was, “What next?” How could NBC continue to provide new innovations in the Olympics video experience, and continue to set the standard for broadcasting a major global sports event?

“We really want to give our guests who are in London a unique, personalized experience, and provide a window into the Olympic Games competition that they’ve never seen before,” says Lau.

Solution
NBC has long relied on Cisco to provide key technologies to support the network’s coverage of the Games. NBC uses a Cisco IP contribution network to bring high-quality digital video coverage to NBC studios in the United States from Olympic venues thousands of miles away. Cisco solutions have also supported NBC’s media production and editing processes as the broadcaster has moved from traditional tape-based media workflows to end-to-end digital editing and production. Cisco has also provided NBC with vital video and IP networking infrastructure at Olympic venues and accommodations to support NBC technicians, executives, guests, and journalists. Now, NBC is giving select guests in London a glimpse into the TV experience of the future with Cisco Videoscape.

Cisco Videoscape is the Cisco end-to-end solution for delivering a more dynamic, social, interactive, and personalized media experience. It draws on intelligent Cisco video and networking solutions across the cloud, the network, and client devices to reinvent the TV experience.
“Our users in London are going to be amazed at the Cisco Videoscape experience.”

Craig Lau
Vice President of Information Technology for NBC Olympics

Reinventing the TV Experience
Using Cisco Videoscape technology, NBC will deliver a personalized, interactive, multi-screen Olympics experience to select users at event venues and accommodations. NBC will live-stream all six of its U.S. TV channels airing Olympic events through the Videoscape experience, as well as hundreds of hours of on-demand content from NBC’s coverage of the games.

Users will be able to search across all live and on-demand content, and pause and record live TV in the cloud for the duration of the games. They will also be able to switch from TV, to tablet, to smartphone, and back again, picking up right where they left off in the event they were watching.

And, Cisco Videoscape will let users combine synchronized applications on their smartphones or tablets with live TV coverage. With the ability to access real-time interactive web content such as event scores and medal tallies, athlete bios, and more, users will enjoy an amazing multi-screen experience unlike anything they’ve seen before.

To support NBC’s effort, Cisco will provide video encoders and decoders, set-top boxes, digital video recorders (DVRs) video file servers, a custom-built interactive programming guide, and much more. The solution will create a medianet – a high-performance IP network optimized for video delivery – just for guest video services at the London Olympic Games. It will be built with Cisco Nexus ® Family switches, Cisco Catalyst® switches, and Cisco Aironet® wireless solutions to create a state-of-the-art platform for distributing multi-channel live and on-demand video to event venues.

Cisco video servers will record all six NBC U.S. channels (WNBC, CNBC, MSNBC, NBC Sports Network, Telemundo, and Bravo) and allow viewers to navigate back in time to play back anything on the schedule. In addition, Cisco will provide iPads for guests to view NBC channels and/or content on a portable device. Guests will also be able to play back content on any of the TVs NBC will be distributing at the Savoy Hotel for the duration of the Games.

“Our users in London are going to be amazed at the Cisco Videoscape experience,” says Lau. “It will give them a glimpse of how we think people will watch NBC Sports coverage in the future.”

Supporting Video Production Across Thousands of Miles
In addition to the Cisco Videoscape experience, Cisco will once again support a state-of-the-art IP contribution network for NBC’s Olympic Games coverage. As they did previously for NBC in Beijing and Vancouver, Cisco IP video contribution technologies will enable the lossless, high-quality transport of gigabyte-sized media files between London and NBC studios in New York and Los Angeles. There, U.S.-based editors will be able to perform shot selection and remotely edit event video as it is captured in London.

“We’re taking the host broadcast video feed, everything they produce, turning it around live, encoding it and compressing it for distribution on the web, so every bit of the live broadcast will be seen on NBCOlympics.com,” says Lau. “The content that NBC creates through the course of the Olympic Games, every piece of it travels, ultimately, through Cisco hardware.”

NBC will be doing all of this on the world’s biggest stage, with literally millions of eyes watching. With the help of Cisco media solutions, NBC will be able to present viewers with every second of the games and hundreds of hours of additional video content.

“We work in an environment that requires absolute, rock-solid, reliability and dependability,” says Lau. “Four years ago in Beijing, more than 12 million people watched 75 million videos on NBCOlympics.com. The ability to watch the Games however, wherever, and whenever you choose is no longer just a neat new experience for our viewers. It’s an absolute expectation. And we rely on Cisco to help us meet that expectation.”
A Winning Partnership

NBC will keep pushing the boundaries as they bring viewers in London and across the United States closer to the Olympic Games. And Cisco will continue to collaborate with NBC, and play a vital role in the delivery of new multi-screen Olympics experiences. With state-of-the-art digital media technologies such as Cisco Videoscape, the possibilities are seemingly unlimited.

“As we continue to explore new ways of covering global events like the Olympic Games, and bringing new ways of experiencing sports coverage to our viewers, I fully expect our collaboration with Cisco will continue to grow. The people at Cisco are passionate, dedicated, and innovative, and have proven time and time again they provide everything we could possibly ask for in a partner.”

For more information

To find out more about how Cisco is supporting NBC’s coverage of the 2012 Summer Olympic Games visit:

To learn more about Cisco Videoscape, visit: