



# World-famous Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

Aerohive connects the world-famous Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew with its reliable and easy-to-manage Wi-Fi solution.

## Challenges

- The need to create new revenue streams that would encourage return visits and continue to create a great experience for customers
- A responsibility to meet customer expectations for fast and reliable internet access across the Gardens
- Sporadic Wi-Fi connectivity and access points from legacy providers failed to sync, placing responsibility on the end user to flag connectivity issues

## Results

- Over 130 reliable access points installed within the Gardens as part of the initial deployment, increasing coverage across Gardens and resulting in a seamless experience for customers
- Creation of an app which runs over the top of the Wi-Fi, giving visitors insights on happenings across the Gardens, in turn enhancing the customer experience
- A significant reduction in complaints from staff and visitors, who previously had to flag when the Wi-Fi was down

## About the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew is a world famous scientific organisation, internationally respected for its outstanding collections as well as its scientific expertise in plant diversity, conservation and sustainable development in the UK and around the world. Its 132 hectares of landscaped gardens, and Kew's country estate, Wakehurst, attract over 1.5 million visits every year.

Kew's aim is to create a world where plants and fungi are understood, valued and conserved. The company uses the power of science and the rich diversity of its Gardens and collections to provide knowledge, inspiration and understanding for garden visitors.

"Going wireless is the crux of our Science Strategy 2020. As technology has expanded, the requirements for our business to go wireless and provide wireless services to both staff and visitors has increased significantly"

—**Matthew Mills**

Head of IT & Information Security at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

As part of its Science Strategy 2020, one of Kew's main strategic outputs over the next six years is to make its resources accessible across different channels reaching a broader and diverse audience. The end goal would be to increase visibility of Kew's scientists in the Gardens.

## Challenge

Over the years, access to wireless has become a critical success factor in helping to reach Kew's goals: The company therefore needed to upgrade to a reliable, easy and manageable service for both its staff and garden visitors.

Kew's previous Wi-Fi system, Aruba Networks, was rolled out sporadically across the Gardens, and the access points didn't sync up to one console to provide overview of all Wi-Fi activity. As a result, Kew was unable to pinpoint when and where connectivity issues were occurring, placing responsibility on the end user to flag such issues to the system administrators. For this reason, a key requirement of the new Wi-Fi solution was to ensure the network could provide insight on user activity, which could also help show Kew where support and additional services could be implemented.

Kew also needed to ensure that the coverage of Wi-Fi could be broadened from beyond the entry gates and business hubs within the park. With the rise of connected devices, visitors expect internet access wherever they go, and so the Wi-Fi service needed to be able to meet this expectation. Broadening the coverage of Wi-Fi would allow the visitors to gain access to information on the plants and fungi which they're standing right in front of, via their iPhone, iPad or smart watch; as opposed to having to walk to a coverage hot-spot to gain the same information.

Performance and reliability was also a key requirement that Kew needed to consider when weighing up a new system. The Gardens needed a Wi-Fi provider that was reliable and high performing, not only catering to visitor needs, but also allowing for staff to process business requirements faster.

### Solution

After weighing up other solutions and learning more about Aerohive's architecture, Kew chose Aerohive because of its reliability, ease of use and manageability.

The deployment began by replacing the old Aruba units with new Aerohive units. These units were placed in business offices across the park and in cafes, restaurants and the gates, of the Gardens—as these were previously identified as the Wi-Fi 'hotspots'. Straight off the bat, Kew was able to use the Aerohive units to gain insight into usage rates, and identified a significant growth in demand for wireless in the business areas of the gardens.

As part of the initial deployment, two wireless networks were created for the Gardens: one for visitors and guests, the other for business operation purposes and staff. In doing this, the system administrator can ensure usage of each network is closely managed, and patterns of usage from visitors can be distinguished and catered to.

Since the initial deployment, Aerohive has installed over 130 access points within the park, allowing for a range of devices to run across the two networks—from staff barcode scanners, to guest iPhones and iPads. The increased coverage range has also allowed Kew to roll out iBeacons across the park, sharing additional information on visitor locations with administrators who instruct managers to shift support staff accordingly.

To cater to the company's mission, Kew has also built an app which runs over the park's Wi-Fi system. The app allows staff to share real time updates on when flowering is occurring in sections of the park, helping bring visitor experiences to life, as well as educating visitors on the fungi and plants within the Gardens.

### Results

Deploying reliable enterprise Wi-Fi has provided greater insight into customer needs and interactions, and as a result allowed the Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew to provide a greater amount of services and support for its visitors. This has led to an app being developed to run over the top of the Wi-Fi, which gives visitors insights on happenings

across the Gardens, in turn creating a seamless customer experience. Coupled with iBeacons, the app also helps provide insight for Kew's staff, who can delegate tasks and allow for additional staff resourcing, where there are high traffic patterns.

By choosing Aerohive, Kew now has a solution that is not only reliable, but also manageable and easy to use. This has led to a reduction in complaints from staff and visitors, who previously had to flag when the Wi-Fi was down. Thanks to its friendly user interface, staff with a basic IT understanding can use the system to gain insights, which helps the Kew Gardens provide a better service for visitors.

"The Aerohive units are a lot more reliable and trustworthy, and not to mention the visibility – it's phenomenal. I'm particularly impressed with the visitor insights the Aerohive solution has given the team. We now know a lot more about our customers and can better cater for their needs, helping us deliver an exceptional customer experience"

—Matthew Mills

Head of IT & Information Security at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

Having a reliable Wi-Fi solution allows visitors to share their Kew Gardens experience—spreading the word to their personal social networks by uploading images of the Gardens instantaneously. Wi-Fi has also helped bring visitors closer to life the plants and fungi which the garden houses, as well as the scientists who sit behind the information being presented. This resonates with Kew's mission, and pushes the company miles forward towards achieving its Science Strategy 2020.

### Future Outlook

Now that Kew has a reliable Wi-Fi solution in place, the Gardens are able to host larger scale events such as weddings and conferences—both of which rely on wireless for a seamless experience. The scale of such events could be branched out in the future, as the number of access points continue to grow.

In addition to this, the Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew aims to host additional attractions which share its values. Most recently the Gardens became home to the famous Hive installation by Wolfgang Buttress. The Hive is a unique structure, inspired by scientific research into the health of bees, which was originally created as the centrepiece of the UK Pavilion at the 2015 Milan Expo. With such attractions, wireless is vital, as many visitors will look to take and upload photos onto social media—then and there. A reliable Wi-Fi system is therefore crucial to showcasing the Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew as the home of such attractions, ultimately attracting more visitors for the Gardens.



Contact us today to learn how your organization can benefit from Aerohive wireless LAN architecture.

Aerohive Networks, Inc.  
1011 McCarthy Boulevard  
Milpitas, California 95035 USA

toll free 1-866-918-9918  
phone 408-510-6100  
fax 408-510-6199

[www.aerohive.com](http://www.aerohive.com)

CS-RBGK 091316