



"Some of the key reasons Walton Arts Center chose Aerohive were to enable functionality such as secure transaction processing, reliable guest Wi-Fi for our VIP patrons, and ensure reliability for many other mobile and cloud-based business operations. Aerohive has surpassed our expectations in dependability, as well as ease of configuration and implementation. All we know is our patrons and staff are happy, and that makes our job much easier as we plan for future network expansion."

— **Robert Martin**
Database Administrator
Walton Arts Center

Walton Arts Center

Aerohive Powers Leading Arts Center for Reliable Mobile and Cloud-Based Operations

About Walton Arts Center

Founded in 1992, the Walton Arts Center connects and engages people in Northwest Arkansas through inspiring and diverse arts experiences. With a reputation for being the premier center for performing arts and entertainment, it attracts many headline performers each year. The Center offers Broadway shows, a jazz series, family programming, a variety of theatrical performances, arts-based camps, and many more community events. There is classroom space for educational programs to expose all local students in the surrounding school districts to the performing arts. The Center also hosts several resident organizations, including local theater groups, acting as a local consortium. Wal-Mart Stores, Inc., a premier sponsor, has a close relationship with the Walton Arts Center, holding its annual shareholder meetings at the amphitheater, along with monthly executive meetings and other events.

The Challenge

Walton Arts Center found itself at a crossroad, transitioning many of its operations to the cloud and wanting a secure wireless network that could easily provide guest access to its patrons and handle greater density for employees and vendors. In the last two years, the Center has experienced growth, including an employee increase of 25 percent. The population of the city of Fayetteville, where the Center is located, has doubled in the last several years, prompting the Center to expand its theaters through acquisitions and renovations.

In 2014, the Walmart Arkansas Music Pavilion (AMP) opened in a new venue location with capacity for 11,000, and boasts the biggest stage house in Arkansas. With this new facility the IT team planned to deploy new ticketing software hosted in the cloud and with mobile device ticket scanning functionality. Without robust enterprise-class Wi-Fi in place, the Center had an urgent directive to find a secure and scalable Wi-Fi platform that could handle high density requirements and deliver outdoor connectivity.

The Solution

Walton Arts Center first deployed a Meraki solution, but it proved inadequate for the needs of the AMP and the IT staff wanted to standardize on one platform across all facilities. In addition, the Center could not provide Wi-Fi access for VIP patrons and the Meraki solution was experiencing difficulties handling the dramatic increase in network traffic. The Center had recently replaced Cisco switches with Dell and needed the network architecture to be seamless.

After choosing Aerohive for its cloud-based capabilities, ability for remote monitoring, and the intuitive interface for network management, the Center deployed Aerohive AP350, AP121, AP130, and AP1130 access points. The Center also changed out numerous Cisco switches for Dell switches. With a diverse array of arenas and venues, Aerohive's heat mapping tools were critical for the site survey, especially for outdoor theaters. Having a solution in place that streamlined many network processes has freed up time for the IT staff. In addition, Aerohive's superior price performance was critical to the non-profit that works under tight budgets.

The Center has now segmented network traffic and access across the Wi-Fi, giving separate access for administration and staff, vendors, ticket scanner devices, production companies, and Walmart employees. Center employees with tablets take concession orders for box seat and VIP patrons, and a separate guest Wi-Fi network is provided to ensure uninterrupted connectivity. Production companies use a plethora of wireless devices at concert venues and VoIP phones are used across campuses, so having a separate VLAN for these users and devices has been indispensable.

Why Aerohive?

- Seamless access point interaction with Dell switches and unified wired and wireless management with HiveManager NG
- Cloud capabilities ease management for IT staff and provide flexibility
- Price performance and flexible solution allow Center to successfully scale as it grows
- Powerful outdoor Wi-Fi enables flawless connectivity for 11,000-person amphitheater and other venues
- Ease of segregating traffic based on user identity and application permissions

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