

FUTURE IT

— PART TWO

Both stadia and arenas across the globe realise the increasingly important role that Information Technology (IT) will play in their futures. Feature writer, Steve Traiman, gets insight from a number of the leading suppliers of back-end venue services.

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t the 2010 Association of Luxury Suite Directors/Sports & Entertainment Alliance in Technology (ALSD/SEAT-IT) conference in New York, the "Future of IT for Arenas & Stadiums" sessions got the most attention. Information Technology (IT) — in its broadest sense — covers the full range of front-end and back-end operations.

In the Winter '10/11 issue of PanStadia, Part I of this feature covered front-end operations, including: ticketing, access control, promotion/marketing, concessions, and retail solutions. In this, Part II of the feature, CRM, as well as event and facility management solutions will be looked at.

For the front-end, insight was shared on Ticketing and Access Control by ShoWare, ticketportal, AudienceView Ticketing, smartmachine and CTS Eventim Sports; Virtual Suite Sales by IOMedia and Immersive Sports; Cashless Payments by Chess, payment solutions and SKIDATA; Food & Beverage by AgilySys, FanGo and Mobio; and Marketing/Advertising by Sports Revolution. Providing their incisive comments for the back-end stadium and arena solutions for all-in-one management software are AwareManager and Radiant Systems; for event booking, event management and seat allocation, **Dean Evans & Associates**, EventBooking.com, Ungerboeck Systems International (USI), and Ballena Technologies; for incident tracking and security, Versatile Systems, In Stadium Solutions (ISS), and PACIFA Decision; and



AwareManager's command centre at Arsenal FC's Emirates Stadium, in the UK, handles issue and incident tracking, as well as event-day management.

IMAGE: AWAREMANAGER

finally, for digital signage and networking, Texas Digital, Branded Concessions, Cisco and C-nario.

Venue Management Systems

"Advances in Information Technology have significantly changed the way that modern sporting events are being run and managed," noted Morgan Needs, AwareManager's Vice President of Sales at their Boston headquarters. "Nowhere has this been more apparent than in the state-of-the-art facilities where AwareManager has been implemented. Our program is a web-enabled RIA Operations and Facility Management software solution, currently in use at many of the world's most famous stadiums and arenas.

"At the New Meadowlands Stadium, home of the NFL New York Jets and Giants, AwareManager has been implemented throughout the facility. It is being used across multiple departments for tracking everything from pre-event checklists, game day issues, fan feedback and customer service issues, to preventive maintenance and inventory for the entire facility."

Ben Fisher, Managing Director for AwareManager's UK office commented: "Many of AwareManager's European implementations focus heavily on issue and incident tracking, and event-day management, with specific emphasis on pre-event checks because of important regulatory safety requirements."

And Mike Woodall, Key Sales Manager, UK & Europe for AwareManager added: "At Arsenal Football Club's Emirates Stadium, AwareManager is being used to integrate key contractors so that game day issues can be automatically dispatched and addressed as they occur. Arsenal FC can now ensure that they can automatically delegate and respond to issues before they escalate out of control."

Needs rounded off: "With the continual evolution of technology, we're constantly growing and expanding AwareManager's capabilities and functionality. We recently added a Dashboard feature that enables game day staff to view a visual representation of their facility to monitor exactly where an incident is occurring, allowing managers to address it quickly and properly, and provide fans with a safer experience. Our newest hardware-independent applications allow users to add, edit, view, and close out incidents, and work orders right from the field; they can work on any device, including Android, BlackBerry, iPhone and Tablets."

For Radiant Systems Sports and Entertainment Group, General Manager, John Brasch commented: "In today's market, competition for the entertainment dollar is

greater than ever and increasing. To effectively compete, venue operators must have convenient and secure access to mission-critical data across each function of their entire operation, including food and beverage, loyalty, loaded tickets, and most recently, a greater focus on merchandise.

"As a global provider of fully-integrated POS and venue management solutions to over 200 professional sports, collegiate sports and multi-purpose facilities, we assist operators by delivering all technology needs with our venue-focused solution set. This includes Radiant's Quest food and beverage and CounterPoint retail merchandise technologies. In addition, today's operators don't want to go through the hassle of combining technology from several providers, and Radiant has enabled integration of third-party innovations with QuestConnect. This system gives stadium and arena operators more openness to take advantage of new and emerging technologies, such as mobile ordering and digital menu boards." As a good example of this, Brasch noted: "The NFL's Jacksonville (FL) Jaguars implemented our Quest Venue Manager software and hardware in the concession stands and restaurants of EverBank Field last year, ↻

The O2 in London has high praise for EventBooking.com since installing the venue booking system in 2010.

IMAGE: THE O2



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in addition to deploying our CounterPoint retail POS system for its retail operations.”

Brasch added: “Another emerging trend affecting today’s venues are electronic payment innovations and the consumer’s expectation that they be able to use them everywhere, particularly at state-of-the-art venues. Examples of these are near field communication’s (NFC’s) through fobs and smartphones, loaded tickets, gift cards and smartphone ordering/digital wallets. Not only do our technologies meet consumer needs by accepting these different payment methods and processing them faster, we integrate features like encrypted magnetic stripe readers that prohibit cyber criminals from accessing sensitive data.”

Scheduling & Seating Highlights

John Platillero, founder and CEO of EventBooking.com said: “The decade of the ‘90s was all about functionality, whiz-bang reporting, and the integration of various tools into one system. The ‘00s was about discovery of the Internet and what it can offer. I believe this next decade will be about accessibility and service. Software will be delivered as a service, and venues will want to access that service from virtually anywhere. Software maintenance and support has proven to be a distraction to venues whose mission is to deliver great events, not to manage a data centre.

“When we started introducing our EventBooking.com (EB) Software as a Service (SaaS) over twelve years ago, we focused on tasks that made key booking processes easier. Venues enjoyed the system’s simplicity and features such as the ease of sharing avails with their clients. SaaS is all about partnering with a venue to deliver the

most value from technology, with the least burden on the venue. As the technology has advanced, we have increased our functionality from the initial booking focus to now cater for full event management, including reporting.

“In terms of ROI and an uncompromising focus on customer service, we believe EventBooking.com has become a good alternative. In Melbourne, Australia, Neil Croker, CEO of the Palais Theatre, recently subscribed to the EB service, and reported it is saving him one hour per day!”

As an EventBooking.com customer, AEG Europe’s Richard Battersby, Head of Business Systems, added: “At The O2 arena in London, we implemented the latest version of EB. We had used our previous venue booking system since opening in 2007 to book the venue and manage the diary. After being introduced to EventBooking.com in 2010, it became clear that they could offer a cost-effective and easy to use system. The transition to EventBooking.com was incredibly easy and the support from the company team was invaluable. The training delivered made the transition seamless, the data migration of historic and future bookings, and event details, was wholly successful, and the security features allow greater access to the avails diary across the business whilst limiting access to sensitive information.”

Dean Evans & Associates began creating scheduling software in 1986 for a wide variety of venues, including stadia and arenas, advised Tom Schek, Marketing Director. “The result was our Event Management Systems (EMS) program, designed to capture and capitalise on sophisticated CRM information. In the past year, our constant evolution has led to partnerships with digital signage

Infinity Park Sports, Event & Entertainment Campus in Glendale, CO, adopted Dean Evans & Associates’ EMS scheduling software in 2008.

IMAGE: INFINITY PARK



providers that offer enhanced visual communication with stadium audiences, and collaborations with automated people-counting technology companies in order to offer our customers an accurate count of just how many people made use of their facilities. And we added to an already robust toolkit of CRM capabilities with registration and surveying software, which allows stadiums and arenas to create flexible, in-house and public surveys in order to meet the increasing need to engage with employees and customers.”

As an example, the sixteen-acre Infinity Park Sports, Event & Entertainment Campus in Glendale, CO, adopted EMS in 2008, and the sports complex and its use of the scheduling software have been growing together ever since. Schek said: “The Campus uses EMS scheduling solutions to book high-profile rugby professional and league matches in its 4,000-seat stadium, and proms, conferences, as well as a host of other activities in its 240,000sqft event centre. Behind the scenes, event schedulers are increasingly using EMS to coordinate the resources — from catering and concessions to audio-visual equipment — associated with each unique event.”

He added: “Infinity Park is following the path other stadiums and arenas have successfully taken. In 1999, Qwest Field opened in Seattle, WA, with EMS playing a large part off the field when it came to customer priorities. One of the bigger challenges is planning the major events around the NFL Seattle Seahawks football games. Each April, the NFL releases the season schedule and prior to that, FGI solicits a list of preferred dates from their ‘Big 5’ customers who hold large expo-type events each year. After the Seahawk’s home games are entered into EMS, the Big 5 preferences are considered next. Invesco Field at Mile High, home of the NFL Denver Broncos, also extensively makes use of EMS when it comes to managing the stadium’s field, meeting spaces, labour, A/V equipment, furniture, rec centre, parking lot and even offsite facilities.”

Krister Ungerboeck, President of Ungerboeck Software International (USI), observed: “In the past, software developers had to make tradeoffs between advanced features, productivity and ease of use — but, the web has changed the game. Over the past three years, we’ve invested over US\$10m — or 75% of our R&D investment — to turn those assumptions on their head — and to deliver a completely new user interface that simultaneously maximises ease of use, performance and advanced

automation features. These are web-based and Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) solutions that use Rich Internet Application (RIA) technology.”

Ungerboeck continued: “RIA technology has finally allowed USI to bring the power of our desktop and server solutions to the web without the productivity sacrifices that come along with traditional web applications. Role-based user interfaces fit each individual user ‘like a glove’ and drive more productivity and user delight, and they yield more productivity because users see only the information they need, where they want to see it. Further, these interfaces dramatically reduce time spent on end-user support time and reduce total cost of ownership.

“The work has culminated in the release of Ungerboeck Mobile and the next generation of Ungerboeck Software 20.3; one of the first RIAs for the events industry and the newest event management software to offer a role based user interface. As a further step, at IAVM’s VenueConnect 2011 in July, we’ll have a pre-launch of a new product called ‘Ungerboeck Software for Arenas & Stadia’ that will leverage the latest advances in web usability and cloud computing technology, within financial reach of any size sports facility.”

For Ballena Technologies, Director of Business Management Jeff Sheratt said: “Since its inception in 2008, the Ballena Technologies’ Seat Relocation Management System (SRMS) has been customised for dozens of selection processes that have been scheduled and/or completed in collegiate and professional sports. Premium seating, club areas, suites, parking, seat upgrades and sponsorship are specific areas in which Ballena has tailored the SRMS to match the business rules of their customers. The ability to integrate with any ticketing provider and third party vendor adds to its flexibility, making each selection process unique to the individual client’s needs. Standardising and documenting the systems Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) to further enhance connectivity is the current focus for Ballena.

“The best ideas typically come from those in charge of the task at hand. In 2006, the University of Virginia was tasked with re-seating their 60,000-seat Scott Stadium. Searching for an alternative to phone calls and in person meetings, the Cavaliers came to us with the idea of creating an online tool; a virtual environment in which donors control their selection for individual seats and parking spaces. With the new tool, a process that previously had

For the Minnesota Twins, Ballena Technologies' SRMS can show the availability of each specific seat within Target Field and its associated price.

IMAGE: BALLENA TECHNOLOGIES



At Target Field, Ballena Technologies also colour-codes the venue by availability based on the existing seating inventory.

IMAGE: BALLENA TECHNOLOGIES

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taken months, was completed in weeks, and while the ticket office saved time and money, the donors benefited by controlling their specific selections. The result was a win-win.”

“The MLB Minnesota Twins used our SRMS to migrate all of their ticket holders from the old Metrodome into the new Target Field. Season and half-season plans were utilised in the SRMS for seat selection in Target Field, and the Twins were very pleased with results,” said Sheratt.

Patrick Forsland, Manager, Minnesota Twins Target Field Services Team, added: “Most teams that have moved into a new facility have assigned season-ticket locations, rather than have their fans select their own seats. They have fans fill out a seat-preference questionnaire, and then assign seats based on their priority-model protocols and questionnaire responses. That was what we initially planned, until we discovered that Ballena had just developed their SRMS system. We were able to watch the system in action, and quickly determined to use SRMS. It gave our season ticket holders the ability to view every available seat at Target Field, see a simulated 3-D image of the ballpark from those seats, and select the seats that best match their desires. The Minnesota Twins, as an organisation, felt it was extremely important

to give our fans as much freedom of choice as possible in selecting their seats, and our season ticket holders have been happy with the process.”

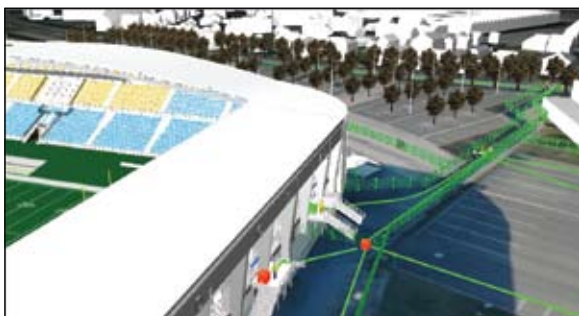
Incident Tracking & Security

Every head of security at sports facilities, particularly large stadiums, has to manage hundreds of stewards and homeland/local authority officers. The big concern is how to make the right decisions when you have to foresee the best security plan according to gameday specific parameters. For staffing, the key question is “Do we need 400 stewards or are 360 enough, and where are they the most useful to efficiently manage crowds interactions and provide the best security feeling for spectators?”

Julien Piwowar, President of French-based PACIFA Decision, replied: “To answer these problematic situations, PACIFA Decision is providing an innovative decision-making tool. Our solution gathers various kinds of functionalities to manage staff, including cost and vulnerabilities assessments on each access within the stadium and its surroundings. Our 3-D software is based on multi-criteria analysis, realised with subject matter experts of the client facility. Combined with specific inputs for each match, such as number of spectators

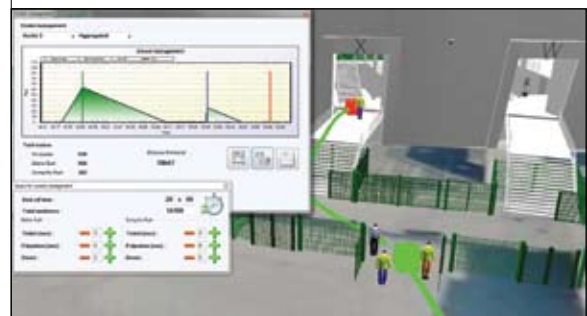
PACIFA Decision's event staffing solution uses 3-D models with views on paths and access to enter the stadium.

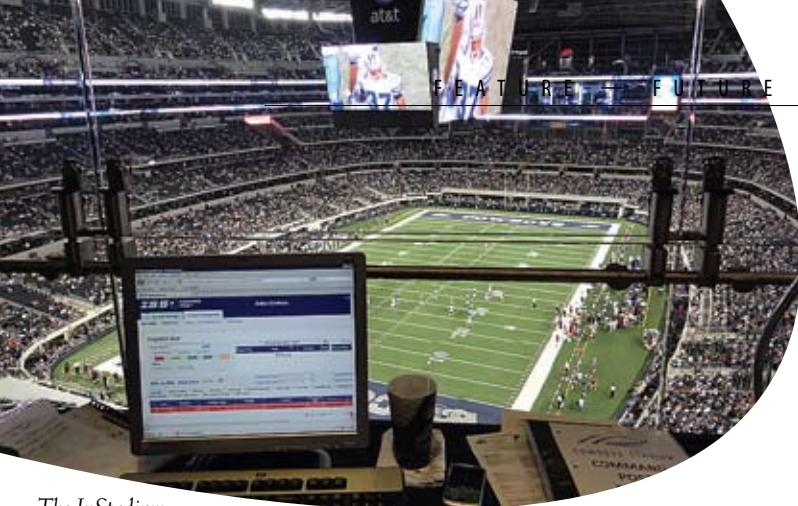
IMAGE: PACIFA DECISION



Stadia tests of PACIFA Decision's event staffing solution included the charting of crowd management by anticipation according to checking times on each access point.

IMAGE: PACIFA DECISION





The InStadium Solutions' gameday management system is utilised in the Command Post high above the new NFL Dallas Cowboys Stadium.

IMAGE: ISS

expected or geopolitical context, it is then possible to have a dynamic map of critical spots with associated staff needs. Moreover, a special option permits management to know exactly how many gates to open on each entrance access to ensure smooth crowd flow.

"We worked all the details out on that project with the close support of the French Federation of Football, with the main objective to set it up for stadiums hosting matches for UEFA's EURO 2016 championship. To get approval of the software, we made recent live tests in the 20,400-seat Stade de l'Aube in Troyes and the 21,600-seat Auguste Delaune Stadium in Reims, with the U-21 France versus Spain match. Results provided by the new PACIFA application were a success and every part of the organisation has found benefits to use such a decision making tool in security and events management.

"With the current generation of multifunction stadiums, in which hospitality and safety are both fundamental to maintain the best fidelity for spectators, it appears necessary to work with an innovative IT tool to be more efficient and concrete with such necessary security anticipation skills."

For InStadiumSolutions (ISS), Vice President Scott Meyers responded: "Our technology fills the void in the successful incident management of any sports facility. Our gameday management system platform minimises incidents that could potentially become a liability by drastically shortening response times. ISS provides a fully-integrated platform that incorporates two-way Fan Text Messaging, Incident and Computerised Maintenance Management Systems, and two-way handheld Android communicators.

Versatile Systems' SyncSeer Venue Management System is used by the NFL San Diego Chargers at its home field, city-owned Qualcomm Stadium.

IMAGE: SAN DIEGO CHARGERS

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"The ISS 2-way Handheld Communicator, designed to operate on a facility's own secure Wi-Fi or Data Network, revolutionises the speed and accuracy in which staff can report and manage incidents. The system also incorporates text messages that are received by staff from spectators to provide instant response to mitigate issues as they happen, and prevent others from escalating into a more serious situation. Thousands of eyes, other than staff, can now help report unruly fan behaviour and other important issues that affect the gameday experience.

"The platform eliminates pen and paper, and allows all data and records from incidents to be tracked, managed, and referenced for detailed analytics that help better manage future events and as a powerful paper trail for liability defence. All components of the ISS system work seamlessly together to help manage facilities more efficiently and enhance the fan experience. From NFL stadiums to small amphitheatres, a variety of sports and entertainment venues presently use our platform, with a prime example being the successful integration of ISS at the new NFL Dallas Cowboys Stadium."

Jamie Cohen, Director of Professional Services at Versatile Systems, offered: "Versatile Systems' SyncSeer Venue Management System provides real time visibility, interactivity and the responsiveness needed to manage incidents. Our solution, originally developed several years ago for mission-critical environments in the health-care industry, also provides the necessary reporting for large public facilities, including stadiums and arenas, in a safer and more efficient manner.



"SyncSeer can be deployed locally at the venue or hosted by Versatile and offered as a SaaS — a sophisticated standalone incident tracking solution hosted in the 'cloud'. The system delivers a scalable and flexible approach to handle rapidly occurring incidents, no matter the size or type of venue, while providing a full historical log of all incidents. Our Incident Data Warehouse ensures that a full history of the activities associated with each incident, including voice, video and data, are retained for forensic, liability and audit requirements.


"As the next generation in incident tracking, we proposed SyncSeer to the NFL San Diego Chargers for their city-owned Qualcomm Stadium. The team became our first sports venue client and has been impressed with the system's ability to automate workflows, integrate with devices from different suppliers, and assess data as it is consumed by the system. Motorola is our partner in San Diego and potentially at other opportunities as well. However, one of SyncSeer's strengths is that we can very quickly and easily integrate with many different systems, and its flexibility allows configurations to be tailored to the customer's changing needs."

Digital Signage & Networking

Texas Digital — with its headquarters in College Station, Texas — and Branded Concessions — based in Atlanta, Georgia — have jointly developed a mobile concessions cart as a unique event and facility management tool. It incorporates the eye-catching effectiveness of multi-media, retains the one-on-one customer food-service experience so integral to live events, and effectively addresses the obstacles posed by limited cabling and infrastructure at many stadiums, arenas and convention centres.

Romney Stewart, Vice President of Customer Services at Texas Digital, advised: "This tool gives venues an ability to cater to their customers with highly engaging media to improve their attendees' experience, but in a cost-effective yet highly reliable technical fashion."

Tim Miller, CEO and founder of Branded Concessions, added: "This mobile tool will revolutionise how stadiums and arenas can reach more of their fans, and is the trend of the future in the industry."

The cart includes a 42 or 46-inch LCD acting as a digital menu board, connected wirelessly to Texas Digital's VitalCAST digital signage solution, so it can easily be adapted 



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This mobile concessions cart, designed by Branded Concessions, is driven by Texas Digital's VitalCAST digital signage solution.

IMAGE: TEXAS DIGITAL

for use at virtually any game or event. The front-facing static signage at waist level can be branded and easily changed out for any particular food concept, while the LCD displays mounted at eye level on the cart are easily updated with digital menus pertinent to the game or event. The cart's portability and wireless connectivity make it quick and easy to adapt the venue's concessions offerings to meet the demands of a wide spectrum of events.

Stewart noted: "Texas Digital has installed several mobile concessions carts at the 3.9 million-square-foot Georgia World Congress Center (GWCC) in downtown Atlanta. Adjacent to the Georgia Dome, it ranks among the top five largest convention destinations in the US and is one of the best sports and entertainment campuses in the world. The Center had the same challenge many stadiums and arenas across the world face in providing customers with products specific to their location but doing so in an older venue that may lack the technical advancements that a new, recently built facility might possess. Our VitalCAST software drives the LCD display and our VitalCAST system communicates over the GWCC's wireless network for a cable and hassle-free communications set-up. A very small form-factor media player is installed at each cart to drive content to the display that can be scheduled by day part and convey a large variety of video, image, and live feed types."

For Cisco Sports and Entertainment, Tracy Hughes, who leads Worldwide Business Development, advised: "The sports and entertainment venue industry has had a need for converging disparate building networks onto a unified, flexible IP-enabled platform. Cisco allows arenas and stadiums to centrally manage these complex network environments, ranging from ticketing, building management, and access control to communications, video and digital signage, and 'future proof' their venues for years to come.

"Such major new US venues as Yankee Stadium, New Meadowlands Stadium, and CONSOL Energy Center join existing icons such as Millennium Stadium in Cardiff, The O2 in London, Staples Center in Los Angeles, and Eden Park in Auckland (NZ) in their deployment of Cisco's Connected Stadium architecture and Cisco StadiumVision.



Texas Digital's VitalCAST solution for mobile concession carts integrates advertising, promotion and menu information.

IMAGE: TEXAS DIGITAL

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Cisco's StadiumVision enhances experiences and revenues at CONSOL Energy Center, home of the NHL Pittsburgh Penguins.

IMAGE: CONSOL ENERGY CENTER

"Our StadiumVision solution transforms the venue to address the unique needs of each event, providing more immersive and entertaining environments. With the network as their platform for innovation, these arenas and stadia are networked with thousands of concourse, concession, club and suite displays so that live HD video and targeted sponsor advertising is distributed to the right location, at the right time, for the right audience."

David Peart, Vice President of the NHL Pittsburgh Penguins, whose home is one of Cisco's client venues, CONSOL Energy Center, commented: "When we looked at investing in technology for the CONSOL Energy Center, we considered four key aspects of return: Will it enhance the fan experience? Does it provide sponsor value? Will it help promote our brand identity as an innovative organization? Will it help us drive revenue generation? StadiumVision provided a platform that achieved all four of those objectives with great success."

For C-nario, Yael Elstein, Vice President advised: "Stadiums and arenas hosting thousands of people require large, high impact multi-displays to engage the audience, communicate relevant information and create a unique viewer experience. The audience benefits from an enhanced experience that takes any game or event to a new level of excitement and interaction, attracting new audiences and events."

"Digital signage turns the stadium into a modern and more competitive venue. It also monetises existing infrastructure, and turns the venue into a marketing platform,

creating new revenue streams from advertising and targeted promotions. It perfectly meets the needs of stadiums and arenas for large screens and video walls that broadcast the game and display various content, including real time information, advertisements, replays, and way-finding information. The real-time nature of digital signage also enables trigger-based programming to match dynamic events during the game, such as displaying a substituted player's stats when he comes into the game.

"To meet all the needs of sports venues for digital signage, broadcasting, and advertising on one centrally-managed, unified platform, C-nario has developed 'C-sport', a unique software solution for digital signage networks. The solution is based on a sales-driven approach, integrating advertising as a part of the content mix in real time. Advertisers can sponsor specific game events such as a goal, touchdown, foul or timeout, so the solution supports flexible and modular advertising models and pricing, resulting in increased ad sales and revenue.

"C-sport provides the venue's' operational staff with both local and remote tools for management, distribution, control and monitoring of the entire system through a unified platform, including event/show control. C-sport controls multiple screens of different types and purposes, such as main LEDs, TV circuits, line boarding, VIP lounges, menu boards and more. The various types of content can be integrated, with the necessary

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Inset: C-nario's C-sport software solution drives digital signage applications at the VIP lounges of Lucas Oil Stadium, home of the NFL Indianapolis Colts.

IMAGE: C-NARIO



tions include video walls in the Baker & Daniels Club and other VIP lounge locations at Lucas Oil Stadium for the NFL Indianapolis Colts, and the new Almaty Stadium in Kazakhstan, which at night is aglow with exterior C-sport digital signage applications."

Future Outlook for Back-End Venue Services

Looking ahead, AwareManager's Morgan Needs said: "As the effective management of stadia becomes ever more complex, there is a greater requirement for a comprehensive solution to aid stadium and event managers. Some of our current developments include risk management, event project management, text messaging and RFID/bar-coding capabilities, with a continual, long-term investment in state-of-the-art technologies to meet our clients' future needs."

Radiant Systems' John Brasch observed: "Technology brings convenience to the consumer through new products and services almost every day, and it's no different at a sporting event. In order to be properly prepared for these changes in the future, Radiant will continue to think and develop in an open, yet standard manner. By doing so, we hold true as a technology partner, enabling the new services and solutions that our customers are hungry for."

For EventBooking.com, John Platillero commented: "Going paperless — or at least greatly reducing printed



output — will become more of a reality in the future, as small, handheld Wi-Fi-enabled tablet devices become more affordable, and as venues continue to expand Wi-Fi access throughout their buildings. Mass-customisation will become a reality as each user is able to customise his or her own portals of information. Internal venue communication will improve with interactive online forums and blogs. External communication with clients will leap forward as online event coordination increases the level of customer service.”

USI’s Krister Ungerboeck responded: “In the future, back-end solutions will need to be focused not just on increasing productivity, but on enhancing the overall experience with the application, and empowering employees to add more value to the organisation. In many ways, back-end technologies need to treat the employee in the same way that the venue employee treats the guest, delivering memorable experiences that make the employees want to work in the application and drive that next piece of business into their building.”

For Dean Evans & Associates, Tom Schek commented: “EMS has a strong tradition of working with customers and soliciting software enhancement requests based on their growing needs. In the next decade, we plan to continue to foster these relationships with our arena and stadium customers.”

Ballena Technologies’ Jeff Sherratt said: “The next step is taking the SRMS into mobile and tablet platforms, as their popularity and demand amongst consumers continues to rise. Additionally, social networking will be further integrated to add visibility of the processes through these viral tools. As we look further into the future, we believe customers will be able to virtually sit in each seat in the venue with the look and feel of attending the event. Sales representative avatars will automatically guide customers to upgrade options and speak to amenities.”

Scott Meyers of ISS noted: “We envision dramatic advances technologically during the next decade for venue management, with development of future devices that further close the communication gap between fans and stadium staff. Interactive fan experience with technology, such as augmented reality, will revolutionise and invigorate the whole activity, and we plan to expand our ISS platform to meet any future need of venue management.”

Versatile’s Jamie Cohen stated: “Over the coming years, we envision developing adaptors to support a multitude of handheld devices, creating a wide net of employees who are able to add to safety and security on game day. In addition, views from a mobile command centre release supervisors from the crowd’s nest and allow them to carry live data throughout the facility. The flexibility offered by SyncSeer’s core workflow engine means that further applications can be built and integrated, providing further value from the system.”

Looking to the next decade and developments, Tim Miller of Branded Concessions advised: “Event facilities must stay in sync with the ever evolving demands of their fans and attendees. They must be more nimble to adapt their customer-facing products, such as concessions stands, and to act as effective hosts, able to cater as well to one-time events such as concerts, high-school tournaments or unique conferences, as they do to their primary sports team tenant. Mobile, ‘networked’ carts allow the facility to target customer traffic points that change based on the type of event, and maximise the effectiveness of IT services without creating a headache for a limited IT staff.”

Cisco’s Tracy Hughes commented: “In the future, networked venues are best positioned to respond faster and adapt to industry trends, increasing sponsor requirements and the adoption of consumer-driven technologies. Looking ahead, worldwide proliferation of mobile devices and applications require all venues to deliver gameday coverage and capacity to meet ever-increasing fan expectations for their personal devices to complement the live action.”

This two-part feature emphasises the vital nature of the role that Information Technology will continue to play in providing creative and responsive front-end and back-end venue solutions. In turn, these solutions will ensure a successful ROI for arenas, stadiums, and teams, as well as an enhanced guest experience for their fans and patrons, which will ultimately all add to the bottom line. 🌱



*Main picture:
Kazabkstan's Almaty Stadium is aglow with digital signage applications driven by C-nario's C-sport software solution.*

IMAGE: C-NARIO