



## CUSTOMER

- Dallas Museum of Art

## INDUSTRY

- Non-profit/Museum

## CHALLENGES

- Breaking down communications silos
- Funding IT services in a non-profit environment
- Attracting high-profile international exhibits
- Deploying technology to leverage programs and exhibitions
- Supporting museum as it transitions from regional to national prominence

## SOLUTION

- The Arts Network, a media-rich content management system and outreach concept
- Communication server: UNIVERGE® NEAX® 2000 IPS
- NEC Digital Signage
- NEC BlueFire VC400 Digital Signage Display Controller
- NEC Wireless Services (network design and installation)

## RESULTS

- Lower total cost of ownership (TCO) with IP telephony system
- The award of an Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) \$500,000+ grant in support of The Arts Network-related project
- *Tutankhamun and the Golden Age of the Pharaohs* exhibition opening October 2008
- Flexible IT, IP telephony and wireless solutions to maximize impact of high-profile exhibits

## Dallas Museum of Art

Established in 1903, The Dallas Museum of Art (DMA) possesses a collection of more than 25,000 art works spanning 5,000 years of history and representing all media. It is renowned for its collections of ancient American cultures, African, Indonesian and South Asia; European and American painting, sculpture and decorative arts; and American and international contemporary art. The DMA attracts more than 500,000 visitors annually.

## CHALLENGES

One of the DMA's prime missions is educational, connecting the broadest possible audience with great works of art in ways that are enriching, enjoyable and educational.

According to Homer Gutierrez, DMA director of Information Technology, "The DMA has a tremendous supply of rich media content. In order to support our ongoing mission, we are digitizing and storing a great many collections and program-related audio, video, and still-image files. This includes interviews with artists and writers, performances, exhibition installations, early photography and detailed object photography. The backlog is extensive and contains some rare items we are excited to soon be sharing with the public."

Gutierrez; Jessica Heimberg, DMA senior Web developer; and key staff planned a content management system with metadata designed for easy search and retrieval.

Says Gutierrez, "Then the question became: How can we get meaningful programming wrapped around our extensive digital content so people can appreciate it? That was the birth of The Arts Network, an approach to fulfilling our educational mission by leveraging technology. The Arts Network has enabled us to break down communication silos and enhance collaboration within the museum while pushing more content out to the Web where people can access it."

## CHALLENGES (CONT.)

“Another challenge we faced,” says Gutierrez, “was the absence of a museum-wide wireless LAN (WLAN) system that would facilitate collaboration by allowing employees in specific roles to stay in touch from anywhere in the building as well as provide a means for visitors to access high-quality digital content on demand,” says Gutierrez.

“When we are preparing for an exhibition opening, time is of the essence. It is crucial that our exhibition staff stay in touch by using fixed-mobility devices so that connections are clear and decision latency is eliminated,” says Gutierrez. “At the same time, our WLAN enables museum visitors to sit in a gallery and access information on their laptops via wireless Web connections.”

*“NEC has been extremely consultative and well informed. They’ve helped us think ahead about what we intend to do with our wireless system so when we get to the future, we won’t have to pay extra costs,” concludes Gutierrez.*

## SOLUTION

The DMA has been an NEC Unified Solutions customer since 2005 when it chose NEC to install a more robust data infrastructure along with a UNIVERGE NEAX 2000 IPS communications server for a voice-over-IP environment.

More recently, the museum installed five NEC digital signs powered by an NEC BlueFire VC400 Digital Signage Display Controller. “The signs inform people of exhibits, hours, and other useful information,” says Gutierrez.

The Arts Network concept matured during a series of in-house, cross-departmental brainstorming sessions in 2005. Educators, technology experts, and workshop leaders contributed ideas to address the desire of our audience to use cell phones, iPods, video and other electronic means to plug into museum programs, both while visiting the museum and online. With support and funding coming from both internal and external sources, The Arts Network was launched.

One of the DMA’s priorities was the installation of a wireless voice over WLAN (VoWLAN) system. The DMA turned to NEC for wireless system design and installation.

“NEC Wireless Services did an excellent job of working around exhibition department schedules and staying in close touch with the registrars who track the location of art objects,” said Gutierrez.

## RESULTS

“Moving to the 2000 IPS and a voice over IP (VoIP) system with IP phones has eased system management and lowered our total cost of ownership,” says Gutierrez. “Recent funding of the Arts Network made possible our VoWLAN system which now covers 85 percent of our campus. It has helped eliminate communication silos by improving employees’ ability to stay in touch while it supports visitors’ laptop connections in the galleries.”

In 2007, the DMA was notified that the Egyptian government chose it as one of its venues for its *Tutankhamun and the Golden Age of the Pharaohs* exhibit. Opening day is October 20, 2008. “This will be a landmark event that we expect will add to the DMA’s stature,” says Gutierrez.

“Our IT must be flexible enough to accommodate whatever the exhibition team needs. The clarity and flexibility of our communication is extremely important,” he says. “The Arts Network has been instrumental in preparing the museum to maximize a high-profile exhibition like this one.”

Gutierrez intends to have NEC install two additional digital signs near the ticket-holder lines to display waiting times and other pertinent information. He is also testing Vocera wireless terminals, which provide hands-free, voice-activated instant communications for added employee productivity when work-roles require it.

The Arts Network will be funding other initiatives:

- Gutierrez will soon be having NEC install wireless coverage to the remaining 15 percent of the campus.
- Dual-mode (WLAN and cellular) wireless devices are being tested and will be rolled out to employees in specific roles.
- Installation of a femtocell signal-repeater will enable usage of cell phones for audio tours. Visitors will be able to enter a number on their cell phone and listen to a recorded description of an art work.

“NEC has been extremely proactive, helping us make the most of what we have; extremely consultative and well informed. They’ve helped us think ahead about what we intend to do with our wireless system so when we get to the future, we won’t have to pay extra costs,” concludes Gutierrez.