

The O₂

NEC Helps AEG Create The O₂
A World of Entertainment Under One Roof



NEC - Customer Case Study

“Our objective from the start was to create Europe’s most technically advanced venue. With NEC, we have made this happen.”

Lesley Saville, Chief Marketing Officer, AEG Europe.



The O₂

The O₂ in London, developed by AEG Europe, is the UK's newest and largest entertainment complex and has already played host to world-famous acts and attracted millions of visitors in its first six months of operation.

The O₂ features a 20,000 capacity music and sport arena, an 11-screen multiplex cinema, an exhibition centre, a seasonal ice rink, IndigO₂ (a 2,350 capacity music venue) and more than 30 bars and restaurants. The O₂ is probably the most technically advanced venue in Europe and, according to David Campbell, President AEG Europe, "It is truly a 21st century building."

From the outset, AEG Europe set out to make The O₂ the number one international entertainment venue. They recognised that to operate and manage such a large complex venue, they would have to utilise the best of cutting edge technology and networking.

NEC at The O₂

- Complete IP infrastructure
- Voice solutions to support 2500 employees, plus visitors
- Time and attendance system based on RFID cards
- Access control
- Time and attendance system based on RFID cards
- Europe's largest digital cinema complex
- "The NEC Experience" Demonstration Suite
- 400 wireless access points

The challenge was to create a flexible, reliable and resilient infrastructure for voice, data and IT communications throughout the venue. The solution had to support communications for some 2,500 employees and a varying number of visitors, enabling them to access communications, regardless of their location in the venue. Access control was a key requirement - to maintain security while optimising the customer experience and simplifying staff management. The infrastructure had to support other sophisticated applications and accommodate growth in line with anticipated future needs. Finally, the project had to be completed in an extremely tight timescale.

Lesley Saville, Chief Marketing Officer, AEG Europe said, "We knew this was going to be a major undertaking, fortunately NEC adds such value along the way that 1+1 make 3 - AEG and NEC together."

Richard Farnworth, General Manager, Enterprise Solutions, NEC UK said, "The O₂ highlights how NEC is able to draw on solutions and competencies from across the organisation and put together multi-disciplinary teams to deliver a full range of venue management solutions. Despite the scale and complexity of the task, we completed the project on budget and a week ahead of schedule."

Communications for a changing population

The O₂ now has a fully-converged IP communications solution with a single integrated network infrastructure for all voice, data and IT communications. The solution provides flexibility, reliability and resilience, which means that both permanent and temporary users can stay connected wherever they are in the venue.

It's vital in a busy venue like The O₂ to have access to communications that can be relied upon at all times. The voice communications solution offers a high level of reliability and includes built-in redundancy. Duplicate servers take over

in the case of any failure in the primary server. In the unlikely event of a complete communications failure, a secondary facility outside the venue ensures the constant availability of communications.

As well as supporting communications for employees, the voice solution caters for potentially high numbers of temporary visitors.

Communications on this scale mean that simple, efficient network management is essential to cope with the rich functionality and the potential allocation of hundreds of temporary users. The communications infrastructure incorporates an intuitive, flexible,





intelligent management application that enables quick and easy changes. It also supports the simple assignment of devices and handsets, the creation of user groups and billing per user or group.

Keeping The O₂ secure

Staff monitoring is a major challenge in a venue as large as The O₂. An e-entitlement solution ensures that only authorised staff can enter controlled areas of The O₂ and only then when working. Biometric systems are used to control access to high security areas. The access control solutions are also used for managing staff efficiently. A sophisticated time and attendance system, based on RFID cards, gives the management team up-to-date staff information on the number of employees and the skills profile on site for different events. Lesley

Saville said, "It's essential that we have the right people in place for every event. This helps us make optimum use of our resources and ensures we can deliver the highest standards of service to our customers."

Europe's largest digital cinema complex

The O₂ hosts Europe's largest and most sophisticated cinema complex. It is the first custom-built digital cinema complex in Europe and features the latest NEC digital projectors and a 22 metre NEC screen - the largest in Europe.

Looking ahead

The O₂ has given London an entertainment venue it can be proud of and it has proved a huge success in its first few months. Proof of its growing

international status came when The O₂ beat off all competition to be voted "Best New Concert Venue" and "Best International Arena of the Year" at the Pollster Concert Industry Awards. David Campbell, CEO, AEG said, "We are ecstatic to be recognised by industry peers for what we have achieved. It helps us prove we are indeed a world-class venue."

Looking ahead, the IP infrastructure provides a platform for future growth and The O₂ is already planning new applications that include a loyalty membership scheme using RFID cards and a merchandising kiosk. Developments like these will help to improve the quality of customer service and enhance the customer experience even more.

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