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The customer summary

Customer name
Greater Toronto Airports
Authority (GTAA)

Industry
Transportation
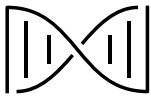
Location
Toronto, Ontario
Canada

Toronto's "Game Changing" Airport Wi-Fi

GTAA improves passenger experiences and engagement with Cisco DNA Spaces

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Challenges

- Improve Wi-Fi connectivity and reliability
- Develop new passenger services
- Drive new vendor and employee outcomes

Solutions

- Next-generation Wi-Fi infrastructure with location and context awareness

Results

- Increased airport Wi-Fi speed from 10 Mbps to 60–100 Mbps
- Reduced wireless connectivity incidents from more than 1500 to less than 100 per year
- Slashed troubleshooting time from one hour to 10 minutes
- Gained new operational insights and revenue possibilities

Improving passenger experiences

GTAA had long struggled to deliver seamless, reliable Wi-Fi at Toronto Pearson, Canada's largest airport. The access portal wasn't user friendly and the login process was cumbersome. The system frequently timed out during user authentication, resulting in connection failures. And even when users were able to connect, they often experienced frustratingly slow internet speeds due to a backend gateway bottleneck.

"We needed to improve our wireless infrastructure and passenger experience," says Daniela Marchetti, manager of digital solutions at GTAA. "Our previous solution provided neither data visibility nor operational control, and we wanted a strategic partner who could help us advance our Wi-Fi capabilities over time."

GTAA found the right partner in Cisco and is now using Cisco DNA® Spaces not only to improve wireless connectivity at Toronto Pearson, but also to drive new experiences for its passengers and new outcomes for its vendors and staff.

According to Marchetti, the average Wi-Fi speed in the airport's terminals has improved from less than 10 Mbps to 60–100 Mbps, and users will soon experience an additional boost when GTAA deploys Cisco Catalyst® 9000 Series Access Points. The number of Wi-Fi connection incidents has dropped from more than 1500 per year to less than 100 annually. And troubleshooting those issues now takes 10 minutes instead of an hour.

"Robust Wi-Fi is table stakes for an airport," Marchetti says. "Passengers expect it to be fast, easy, and secure. We've met those expectations, and now we can do so much more."

Increasing user engagement

With assistance from Wipro Limited, which helped implement and continues to manage the wireless network, GTAA now has a powerful location platform that provides a wealth of operational insights and engagement opportunities.

"We want to deliver the right message to the right user at the right time," Marchetti says. "Cisco DNA Spaces provides location and context awareness, which will allow us to tailor content and offers for each passenger depending on the terminal they're in, whether they're flying domestically or internationally, and other variables."

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Daniela Marchetti
Manager of Digital Solutions, GTAA

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The airport's Wi-Fi portal now provides a user-friendly login experience with seamless authentication. And the wireless network will soon be integrated with GTAA's CRM system for additional passenger communication and engagement.

"When a user logs into the captive portal, it will trigger an email with helpful information about the airport and contextualized information based on the user's location and past behaviors," Marchetti says. "And whether it's through emails or newsletters, we'll be able to engage with passengers after they've left the airport too."

Expanding revenue

In addition to improving passenger connectivity and engagement, GTAA is exploring ways to monetize its new wireless network.

Marchetti says the organization is considering sponsorship programs for brands that want promotional visibility within the airport as well as its website, wireless portal, and passenger emails. GTAA can offer passenger insights — based on location, context, and past preferences — to airport vendors and retailers, giving them the ability to engage passengers in real time with promotional offers. And it can use those same insights to advertise and sell airport services and upgrades, such as priority access in security lines, to passengers directly.

"In the past, we had a blanket approach where every Wi-Fi user had the same experience and received the same information," Marchetti says. "We now have the ability to be more personalized and targeted, which is good for our passengers as well as our vendors and partners."

Extending the network

Cisco DNA Spaces can also be used to improve employee communication and engagement.

"We support thousands of employees and airline staff," Marchetti says. "With the new Wi-Fi network, we can communicate with all of them, or with certain groups. We can promote onsite vendors and provide wayfinding, as we plan

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Manager of Digital Solutions, GTAA

to do for passengers. And we can gain new operational insights that lead to efficiency improvements."

What's more, GTAA can use the wireless network to track airport assets, monitor the occupancy of specific areas within the airport, and measure the length of security lines and other queues.

"We have big plans and there are lots of good things to come," Marchetti says. "Cisco DNA Spaces is a game changer for us."

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Manager of Digital Solutions, GTAA

Product list

- Cisco DNA Spaces
- Cisco Catalyst 9000 Access Points

Learn more about Cisco DNA Spaces and other customer deployments.