



Summary

Inverness is the largest city in the Scottish Highlands and its city centre now has free public WiFi following a collaboration between The Highland Council, Purple and Rapier Systems. The Highland Council wanted to implement a WiFi solution that would allow them to identify who visits the city and gain a way of effectively communicating with visitors. Through the installation of Purple and Ruckus equipment by Rapier Systems, the council can now access a wealth of visitor analytics, all via a simplistic portal dashboard whilst visitors enjoy free, fast WiFi whilst shopping, browsing, working and dining in popular zones of the city centre.

The Challenge

The Highland Council recognised that city centre visitors now expect WiFi as standard and that a lot of metropolises around the world are starting to offer free connectivity. People want to be able to browse the web, access social media and engage with online content whenever and wherever they may be. Therefore, to meet the demands of their consumers the council sought a free, secure, connectivity solution that shoppers, visitors, residents and local business owners could access.

Gaining a detailed understanding of who actually visits Inverness, including visitor names, ages, gender and where they've travelled from was also important to the council. Having limited visibility of their visitors prohibited them from making effective, strategic changes to the city's facilities, events and promotions according to their core visitor demographic. It also stopped them from delivering relevant, targeted communications to specific customer segments and individuals.

Finally, growing profits for city centre businesses is important to the council, so they sought a solution that would allow them to identify how long people dwell in the centre for and how often they visit. This information would help them to work out what can actually improve dwell time and ultimately lead to people spending more money whilst in the city centre.

Discussions and Installation

Towards the end of 2016, Rapier Systems reached out to The Highland Council to see if they were interested in making the city smarter by introducing Purple's WiFi and analytics solution. The firm was invited to host a presentation and detailed demonstration of the Purple product to showcase how the solution could potentially benefit the council, their visitors and local businesses.

The demonstration from Rapier Systems left the customer very impressed and in December 2016 the council agreed to the tender for a preliminary trial, which would see Purple's WiFi and analytics platform plus Ruckus hardware go live in key zones across the city centre for a one year period.

Rapier Systems installed the package at the city's famous Victorian Market plus other popular streets in the centre, including Union Street, Church Street, Falcon Street, Queensgate and Academy Street. The solution officially went live in December 2016, just in time for the busy festive period.

Lucrative Outcomes

The city's WiFi network has received almost 17,000 users in just 6 months, with the majority of individuals using the network for 1 hour or more. Thanks to Purple's platforms, the council can identify exactly where visitors are from, with the top three visitor locations including Inverness, Aberdeen and Glasgow. Through identifying where people are from they can ensure that any events hosted in Inverness don't clash with other happenings in cities where visitors often travel from.

When the visitor reports are exported the council can clearly identify who are their most frequent visitors, what the most popular age group is, when peoples first and last visit was, amongst many other stats which can be used for both marketing purposes and to help plan for the city's future. Data about visitors will also be shared with stakeholders, groups, business and stakeholders to make more informed decisions which may have an effect on the city and surrounding areas.

There seems to be a clear balance between the number of males and females that visit the city centre, with 57% opting to login to the WiFi network via a short form. Whenever a user accesses the network they are prompted to 'like' the official Highland Council Facebook and thanks to this feature the page has received a significant increase in engagement and 'likes'.

People, Places, Presence

Rapier Systems has recently activated presence analytics for Inverness city centre, which enables the council to gain an even deeper understanding of their visitors. With presence reports, the council can identify exactly how long people stay for on average, the split between repeat and new visitors and the most popular time of day for people to visit. This information is extremely useful for the council, especially when events are being hosted at the city. The team will be able to easily measure how successful an event was by seeing if there was an increase in the number of visitors at a certain time and an increase in dwell. They can also cross reference this information with local businesses to see if it increased sales and visitor numbers.

The Highland Council has been impressed with the solution delivered by Rapier Systems, Ruckus and Purple and have recently agreed to roll out Phase 2 of its city centre WiFi Project after a very impressive pilot. Phase 3 aims to take the project model out to towns throughout the highlands using the existing model created from the pilot and main roll out. This project is seen as an important part of the digital upscaling of the Highlands Region.

About Rapier Systems

Formed in 2003 Rapier has unrivalled expertise in the design, delivery and support of wireless (including WiFi) networks and systems; the company is a value added integrator of best-in-class wireless products.

Whether within or between buildings, upgrading or replacing existing networks, or designing and installing new wireless systems, Rapier's experience in environmental analysis and network design ensures complete coverage and optimal performance.

Rapier works with world leading wireless system vendors, including Ruckus, Alvarion, Airtight, Cambium/Motorola, Ceragon, SAF Technika and several more. The company has reached the highest level of accreditation with each of its partners and understands which vendor and product is best suited for each environment.

Rapier has grown dramatically on the back of a surge in demand for wireless networks, which it has designed and installed in a wide variety of challenging environments from colleges and oil rigs to business parks and theatres.

Rapier maintains Scotland's largest Wireless Network, covering Dundee City, Angus and Perth & Kinross Councils, which comprises around 250 sites.

The company has designed and delivered some of the most innovative wireless solutions in the UK, including the largest metropolitan area wireless network in Scotland and one of the largest county-wide wireless networks in England. Rapier delivered the 1st fully licensed Gigabit wireless link in the UK.

The company's headquarters is located in Fife, Scotland and it has offices in St Neots, Cambridgeshire, England.

Rapier has a UK wide customer base in sectors that include Local Government; Transport, Renewables, Oil and Gas, Retail and Leisure.

For further information please visit www.rapiersystems.com

