
Challenges

Branded welcome page

Free Wifi access to guests staying in rooms

Multiple user login from the same room

Prepaid codes for guest in Restaurants lobby etc for Wifi access

Group login for the guest attending conferences, seminars, meetings etc

User registration and approval mechanism

Only authentic User should use the network

Fair bandwidth allocation and other policy implementation

Encourage the user to like and follow the Social media Fan Pages of the Hotel

User activity log record and maintenance

Detail Reporting and Alerts

COMPREHENSIVE BANDWIDTH MANAGEMENT AND INTERNET BILLING SOLUTION AT KAMAT HOTELS

Kamat Hotels (India) Ltd. (KHIL) is engaged in the business of hospitality and allied businesses, and its activities may be broadly categorized into (i) operation of hotels owned by the Company, (ii) management of hotels owned by other parties under contract (iii) catering services and (iv) timeshare.

The Challenges:

In the current competitive market, every hotel aims to provide best facilities and services to its guest to stay ahead of the competition. In order to provide high quality services the hotel needs to invest in good infrastructure, trained staff and implement friendly and prompt services. Over the last few years, Internet service has become a basic need for the hotel guests and implementing a fast and reliable service is necessary to compete in the hospitality market.

Kamat Hotel management was searching for a solution that offered a reliable and cost-effective Internet service to its guest. After trying out the paid service model, the management decided to offer the service free to its guest. However the main challenge was to control access so only the guest staying in the hotel would get the service. In addition they wanted purchase optimal bandwidth to offer basic Internet service (web and email) free to its guest without compromising on the speed of the network. Lastly they also wanted a mechanism to control access and track Internet usage to comply with the local security laws.

The solution was expected to be flexible and reliable to manage fair distribution of bandwidth to all guests in the hotel. In addition to offering the service free to the hotel guests, the management also wanted to charge the users using the service in conference rooms, convention center, hotel lobby and other common areas.

Solution

Branded Captive Portal

User Registration

User approval Mechanism

Multiple User Login from Same Room

Multiple Billing Option

Policy Management

Allotting uploading and downloading quota for guest

Redirecting Guest to Social Media Fan page of Hotel after login

Maintaining User Activity Logs

Reports and Network Monitoring

Additionally, the hotel also wanted to promote its brand and promotions from the Internet service. After considering all requirements for the Internet service, the hotel management selected Wifi-soft's Intelligent Network Controller "Unibox".

The Solutions:

To fulfill the requirements of the hotel, Wifi-soft deployed the comprehensive bandwidth management and internet billing gateway called "Unibox". UniBox was deployed to provide the following solutions -

Branded Captive Portal: The Unibox allows network administrator to create and maintain branded captive portal which include the Name, Logo, Pictures, Banners etc of the hotel, the portal page can reside inside the Unibox or can be hosted on an web external server. Wifi-soft designed a branded captive portal for the hotel based on the inputs provided by the marketing department. Branded captive portal helped the hotel to showcase their brand and push promotions to their guests.

User Registration & Approval:

The hotel wanted to offer WiFi service free to its guest however they were concerned about unauthorized people getting free access to the service. Wifi-soft implemented user registration and approval process on the captive portal. This allowed the network administrator to grant access to customers who were hotel guests while other people were forced to purchase prepaid codes at the front desk. This was accomplished by implementing approval mechanism through UniBox. Each user had to register for an account online and had to get the account approved from the front desk. In addition to controlling access, this method also allowed hotel staff to collect valuable customer information.

Restricting sharing of login information: It is often found that people share username and passwords on public WiFi networks. The hotel wanted to ensure that any guest in the hotel doesn't share the login information with other guest.

Unibox Highlights

Centralized management of subscribers, access points, sessions and billing data

Bandwidth management capabilities

Policy management

Detect torrent,P2P and spamming

Advanced Quality of QOS

3G Support

Content Filtering

24x7 Monitoring

Time and bandwidth based billing plans

Extensive historical and real-time reporting

Customized captive portals

Display advertisements on login portal

Multiple Billing Option: Hotel wanted to have give free WiFi access the guests who are staying in the hotel but wanted to charge WiFi services in public areas like restaurants, lobby, etc moreover the hotel wanted to charge for group access of WiFi in meeting rooms , conference rooms and auditorium . To implement these policies the following billing models were created:

- Free user access to users staying in hotel room.
- Paid prepaid code for the users in public areas like restaurants, lobby etc.
- Paid Group Login ID for WiFi access in meeting and conference rooms.

Policy Management: The hotel wanted to implement different policies like WiFi access according to date and time, fair bandwidth utilization, prioritizing traffic etc. Unibox has advanced network control functions that allow network administrator to implement different policies in group of users to achieve a reliable and robust network.

Daily Upload & Download Quota: Hotel wanted to give a free WiFi access only to the guests staying in the hotel. However they were concerned that free Internet will result in choking of Internet bandwidth and they will need to upgrade their existing Internet connection. UniBox solved the issue by implementing fair usage policy along with daily upload and download restrictions. This ensured that the basic web service was offered to the guests without having to increase the speed of the Internet connection.

Redirecting Guests to Social Media Fan Pages: Social Media has become an important medium for hotels to remain engaged with their guest after they checkout from the hotel. The marketing department wanted to connect with the guest using social media sites like Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. Wifi-soft implemented a social media marketing campaign for the hotel and hosted it on UniBox.

Maintaining User Activity Logs: In many countries, it is mandatory for the hotspot operator to maintain a record of the guest's Internet activity and keep it on file for the law enforcement agencies. UniBox

Unibox Supported Business models

Paid Hotspot

Credit Card Billing

Prepaid Codes

***PMS integration/Bill to
Room***

Mobile Payments

Free Hotspot

Terms Of services

***Free with
Advertisement***

Email based

Hybrid Hotspot

***Tiered Pricing (Free +
Paid)***

Plan Vouchers

allows the network administrator to keep a log of all user activity on the network and keep the records locally in compliance of the laws.

Reports and Network Monitoring: Hotel management wanted to receive daily reports about the user activity, revenue generated and alerts when there was a problem with the network. UniBox provides comprehensive reporting features like the ones mentioned below –

- Online users and their activity reports
- Usage reports
- Billing reports
- System Performance reports

UniBox also has a network monitoring module that alerts the network administrator when there is a problem with the network.

Conclusion: With the help of Unibox the hotel managed to improve the overall WiFi experience of their guests and also improve their bottom line in following ways

- Brand their network.
- Implement Multiple Billing Option
- Ensuring only legitimate use Wifi
- Implement different policies
- Intelligent use of the available bandwidth
- Connecting with the clients over social media
- Better management of network

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