

Debbie Reynolds Auction

Data and communications contractor uses Broadband Bonding to ensure smooth operation of million dollar auction.

IN BRIEF

Industry

Hollywood Memorabilia Auction

Challenge

Finding a cost effective method of supporting the auction's large bandwidth requirements.

Solution

Truffle BBNA in conjunction with WiMAX Modems.

Benefits

Extremely quick and painless setup.

Internet speeds faster than could be provided to the venue.

100% uptime during auction.

COMPANY OVERVIEW

The Debbie Reynolds Hollywood Motion Picture Museum is a non-profit corporation located in North Hollywood, California containing one of the largest collections of Hollywood memorabilia including such pieces as the famous Marilyn Monroe dress from "The Seven year itch." Over the next two or more years, the Museum will be holding auctions for many highly prized items with the help of Mark Sheppard of Sheppard Communications, Inc. who has worked with the museum for years.

Sheppard is a communications specialist and data contractor who works heavily with the government and entertainment industries. As he has helped conduct auctions in the past, Sheppard recognizes the need for a fast and reliable Internet connection at each venue, especially for events of this caliber.

CHALLENGE

In order to prepare for the upcoming event, a single DSL line was ordered through AT&T in order to support the entire infrastructure of the auction being held at the Paley Center for Media in Beverly Hills, California. With the connection delivered 72 hours before the event, Sheppard immediately recognized that this line would be insufficient for the bandwidth needs of the event, including simultaneous live video and audio streams to sites like icollector.

This initiated the search for a cost efficient method to bring more bandwidth to the event center in order to support the large online crowd that was expected to be joining the auction. A single, standard DSL line would provide nowhere near enough bandwidth for the multiple computers on-site needed to run the auction, the audio and video streaming required for the online auction sites which allow off-site bidders from places including the US, Canada, Europe, Japan and Korea. With such time critical and expensive bids happening every minute, a single lost bid could cost the museum millions of dollars in some cases, but a minimum of hundreds of thousands of dollar.

SOLUTION

As Sheppard puts it: "I have used bonding technology before and I was initially uncertain that a unit this affordable could accomplish our goal. After speaking with Mushroom Networks, I was convinced that I wanted to give it a try and I ordered one for the June auction."

After assessing several options for producing the additional bandwidth needed, Sheppard opted to incorporate Mushroom Networks' Truffle to bond together his DSL connection along with multiple WiMAX wireless routers. As a result, the auction ran flawlessly with zero connectivity problems and sustained speeds of up to 20 Mbps down/ 4Mbps up.



CONCLUSION

After analyzing his options, Sheppard decided to utilize the Mushroom Networks Truffle — a perfect solution for his Internet needs. The Truffle combines multiple Internet access lines into a single aggregated line. The aggregation over the Internet lines is done even for a single session, providing the full speed of the lines combined. In Sheppard's case, the Truffle bonded an AT&T DSL connection and a few WiMAX wireless routers together.

In the end, the auction turned out to be the largest single Hollywood auctions in history. It broke the world record for the highest price paid for a costume 3 times over and included the iconic Marilyn Monroe dress which sold for an impressive \$4.6 million. With these kinds of pieces up for auction it is clear that missing even a single bid because of internet connectivity problems could have cost the museum tens of thousands of dollars. Ultimately, the auction went without a hitch and sold over 550 items for a total upwards of \$19 million.

Because the auction proceeded so flawlessly, Sheppard noted that he has already been renewed on next auction by the museum.

"It worked perfectly, right out of the box. I watched the bandwidth status during the event and monitored our traffic and usage and we had zero downtime and as such, no chances of any critical data being lost."

—Mark Sheppard

ABOUT MUSHROOM NETWORKS

Mushroom Networks, Inc., is a privately held company based in San Diego, CA, providing patent pending Broadband Bonding solutions to a range of Internet connection applications. The company's flagship product line targets SMBs, enterprises, multi-tenant buildings, and broadband service providers and bonds dissimilar broadband access technologies forming a single highly reliable broadband pipe that can easily scale based on needs.

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