

CBS SportsLine.com Calls on Air2Web Wireless Technology to Reach a Worldwide Audience



Key highlights

Clients

CBS SportsLine.com, Air2Web

Industry

Wireless services

Business Challenges

- Rapidly deploy wireless services to attract new subscribers and retain existing customers
- Offer access to real-time information, anywhere, anytime, on any device
- Improve branding mechanisms by offering subscription services and advertising inventory that can be sold to customers

Solution Products, Technologies, and Services

- Sun Enterprise™ 420R servers
- Solaris™ Operating Environment
- Java™ 2 Platform, Enterprise Edition (J2EE™) software

About Air2Web

- Offers wireless solutions that enable instant access to mission-critical data
- Serves Fortune 500 customers in a wide range of industries, spanning 30 countries and 27 languages
- Delivers 75 real-world solutions used by more than 240,000 mobile subscribers, generating 8.4 million application accesses per month

“Air2Web-powered applications bring the SportsLine.com experience to a growing audience represented not only by PDAs, but also by millions of digital cell phones.”

*–Dan Smith, Vice President, Applications Engineering
SportsLine.com, Inc.*

The next time you see someone dialing their cell phone, ask them if they can tell you which team just won the big game. Chances are, they know the answer. That’s because huge numbers of avid sports fans are using small wireless devices, like digital cell phones and alphanumeric pagers, to stay in touch with their favorite teams.

In the U.S., one of the most popular sources for this kind of information is the no-fee SportsLine.com “All-the-Time Wireless” service, which delivers in-progress scoring updates for almost every sport. Fans can customize the SportsLine.com service to send only the information they want, as soon as it happens. Fantasy leagues, late-breaking news and scores, and many more options are available through a personalized Web page and specialized software that helps enable any wireless device to log in.

As Dan Smith, SportsLine.com’s Vice President of Applications Engineering said, “Our business is distributing sports content, and any way we can do that faster and more efficiently, the better. We decided to add wireless capability to our popular site because we knew it would help retain existing customers and attract new ones.” Smith continued, “We see wireless not so much as a new service—rather, it’s a great way to extend our existing service. For example, fans could already play our best-of-breed fantasy games through our Web site. The addition of wireless means they can get scores and statistics in real-time while they are away from their PCs, making the game even more fun and exciting.”

Smith concluded, “We wanted to have a strong partner in extending the fantasy experience to our wireless users. Air2Web demonstrated early on that they understand how to deliver content in real time, and through our partnership the fantasy player’s passion for the game can be experienced through their cell phone or other wireless device anytime, and anywhere.”

A scalable, reliable solution built on Sun servers

SportsLine.com, the publisher of CBS SportsLine.com, is at the forefront of media companies providing Internet sports content, community, and e-commerce. The SportsLine.com technology, which wirelessly delivers time-sensitive sports updates and scores virtually any time, any place, is from Air2Web, Inc., and runs on Sun Enterprise™ 420R servers. As a testament to its scalability,

the CBS SportsLine.com site has successfully scaled to more than 168,000 WAP and Palm hits in a single day. Over a one-month period, millions of end users access CBS SportsLine.com using a wide range of devices and platforms—including WAP, Palm, and SMS. The three-week-long NCAA Men's Basketball Championship is one of the biggest drivers of wireless traffic, as customers sign up to receive CBS SportsLine.com content, including tournament scoring alerts.

Why did Air2Web choose Sun™ systems as the foundation of their service offerings? “It was a Day One decision,” stated Sanjoy Malik, president and CEO of Air2Web. “In August of 1999, we had the vision of providing wireless services in a hosted environment and also inside our customers’ corporate firewalls. We knew that this vision demanded hardware and software that was extremely reliable and scalable. It had to have ‘been through the wringer,’ able to handle Fortune 500 companies with business-critical global content that must be available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.”

The business side of wireless technology

While the CBS SportsLine.com application keeps sports fans in touch with their favorite teams, Air2Web also offers its Mobile Internet Platform to organizations for many other applications. For instance, companies use it to wirelessly communicate critical information to their employees. Air2Web’s solutions can efficiently extend productivity applications to mobile workers, including enterprise application integration (EAI), enterprise resource planning (ERP), sales force automation (SFA), customer relationship management (CRM), and supply chain management (SCM). Corporate data, such as financial services, customer self-service, product information, and loyalty account information can be extended to mobile customers. Benefits include revenue generation, improved productivity, reduced costs, and maximized competitive advantage. Besides

CBS SportsLine.com, Air2Web’s customers include ADC, BellSouth, Best Western Hotels, Delta Employees Credit Union, eBay, Holiday Inn, Intercontinental and Crowne Plaza hotels, Lexmark International, UPS, the Weather Channel, and others in the fields of finance, travel and hospitality, media and entertainment, health care, retail, and transportation.

Malik explained, “We couldn’t waste time worrying about whether the hardware or OS was performing. We needed to focus on specific customer requirements, not on whether our data center was reliable. We run all of our hosted solutions on Sun so as to provide the best scalability and reliability for all our customers.” He added, “At this point in time, we’ve had a very high degree of success in meeting our goals, and we’ve had no issues with the performance of Sun’s hardware and software.”

A powerful, flexible solution for mission-critical information, anytime, anywhere

Air2Web’s Mobile Internet Platform provides a powerful, flexible, and comprehensive technology for wirelessly enabling critical back-end solutions and corporate data across any carrier, network, or device. Through an XML or Java™ technology-based environment, developers can extend their applications easily, without extensive rewrites or the need to learn a new development environment.

These applications allow business customers to access data directly using open XML and Java™ 2 Platform, Enterprise Edition (J2EE™) standards. Embedded conditional navigation logic requires minimal user input, and security is achieved through public key infrastructure (PKI), one of the most effective security standards available. To help users interface with mobile devices that may offer limited display and keyboard capabilities, Air2Web’s solution incorporates advanced voice technology including speech recognition, text to speech, and streaming audio. Mobile users can move naturally from data to voice and back to data

again, within a single application.

Air2Web makes its services available in two ways: in its own hosted environment, or behind the customers’ firewall. To reduce initial investment costs and improve speed to market, many customers (including CBS SportsLine.com) choose to have their applications hosted in Air2Web’s secure data center with fully redundant network architecture—Sun Enterprise 420R servers running the Solaris™ Operating Environment. For added control and security, some companies prefer to install and maintain Air2Web’s wireless solutions within their corporate firewalls.

Sun delivers open and integratable infrastructure for wireless applications

Malik said, “Sun is a market leader in hardware and software and delivers the high performance we need to enable rich, seamless user experiences, as well as helping to assure increases in ROI for critical business processes.” In addition, Sun helped Air2Web develop client environments that are portable between devices, so a single application works across multiple device types. Applications are downloaded and installed over this framework, utilizing wireless technology. While providing a secure portal interface to a variety of mobile devices and networks, Sun’s standards-based application infrastructure helps enable connectivity to a variety of back-end, mission-critical applications.

Air2Web’s Mobile Internet Platform software, which is J2EE compliant, manages infrastructure and supports Web services that make it easier to develop secure, robust and interoperable business applications, provides out-of-the-box fail-over capability for applications, and helps prevent hardware lock-in. Today’s wireless technology clearly illustrates Sun’s vision, “The Network Is the Computer™,” for customers in virtually any industry.

Sun's Enterprise 420R server is the latest four-processor workgroup server for network computing based on the UltraSPARC® processor technology. This next-generation server brings multiprocessing power, UltraSCSI disks, and the peripheral component interconnect (PCI) I/O bus to a highly modular, rack-optimized design. The Sun Enterprise 420R system gives customers the flexibility to scale their processing needs without wasting precious space, making it an ideal server for service providers, financial institutions, compute-intensive environments, or anyone who needs strong processing power in a small footprint.

About Air2Web

Headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia, Air2Web's wireless platform is used to mobilize businesses. From wirelessly embracing consumers to enabling employees with anywhere, anytime access to mission-critical data, Air2Web powers more than 75 real-world applications. These encompass enterprise applications, e-mail, product information, order status, news, alerts, and notifications. These deployments serve more than 240,000 mobile subscribers, generating 8.4 million application accesses per month. In just a few years, Air2Web's wireless solutions already span 30 countries and 27 languages, underscoring the company's leadership in functionality, scalability, and global capabilities.

Sun Microsystems, Inc. 4150 Network Circle, Santa Clara, CA 95054 USA Phone 1-650-960-1300 or 1-800-555-9SUN Web sun.com



Sun Worldwide Sales Offices: Argentina +5411-4317-5600, Australia +61-2-9844-5000, Austria +43-1-60563-0, Belgium +32-2-704-8000, Brazil +55-11-5187-2100, Canada +905-477-6745, Chile +56-2-3724500, Colombia +571-629-2323, Commonwealth of Independent States +7-502-935-8411, Czech Republic +420-2-3300-9311, Denmark +45 4555 5000, Egypt +202-570-9442, Estonia +372-6-308-900, Finland +358-9-525-561, France +33-134-03-00-00, Germany +49-89-46008-0, Greece +30-1-618-8111, Hungary +36-1-489-8900, Iceland +354-563-3010, India, Bangalore +91-80-2298989/2295454, New Delhi +91-11-6106000, Mumbai +91-22-6978111, Ireland +353-1-8055-666, Israel +972-9-9710500, Italy +39-02-641511, Japan +81-3-5717-5000, Kazakhstan +7-3272-466774, Korea +82-2-2193-5114, Latvia +371-750-3700, Lithuania +370-729-8468, Luxembourg +352-49 11 33 1, Malaysia +603-21161888, Mexico +52-5-258 6100, The Netherlands +00-31-33-45-15-000, New Zealand, Auckland +64-9-976-6800, Wellington +64-4-462-0780, Norway +47 23 36 96 00, People's Republic of China, Beijing +86-10-6803-5588, Chengdu +86-28-619-9333, Guangzhou +86-20-8755-5900, Shanghai +86-21-6466-1228, Hong Kong +852-2202-6688, Poland +48-22-8747800, Portugal +351-21-4134000, Russia +7-502-935-8411, Saudi Arabia +9661 273 4567, Singapore +65 6438-1888, Slovak Republic +421-2-4342-9485, South Africa +27 11 256-6300, Spain +34-91-596-9900, Sweden +46-8-6311-00, Switzerland, German 41-1-908-90-00, French 41-22-999-0444, Taiwan +886-2-8732-9933, Thailand +662-344-6888, Turkey +90-212-335-22-00, United Arab Emirates +9714-3366333, United Kingdom +44 0 1252 420000, United States +1-800-555-9SUN OR +1-650-960-1300, Venezuela +58-2-905-3800, Or Online at sun.com/store

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