

COMFORTS OF HOME

EXPANDING BANDWIDTH TO KEEP UP WITH GUEST TECH NEEDS

BY ALYSSA GAUTIERI

A decade ago, guests may have brought their laptops along on a business trip. Today, they're bringing their smart phone, tablet, smart watch, laptop, and more. Wireless internet has quickly become if not the most, certainly one of the most important hotel amenities; and in the last few years, bandwidth needs and capacities have exploded in the hospitality industry, according to **John Garland, the IT manager at the Sheraton Dallas Hotel**. Many older wireless systems simply can't support the emerging technological needs of hotel guests.



The Sheraton Dallas Hotel recently implemented a new system to increase its bandwidth capabilities from 1 to 10 gigabits. The hotel's new system allows it to spilt its 10 gigabits between both meeting spaces and guestrooms, depending on the needs of guests. "More bandwidth opens us up to more options. We can tailor it to create the best possible guest experience," Garland says.

With a constant growth in technology and endless new devices, the hotel doesn't want to fall behind. "Once guests are used to the newest standards, they start to demand them," Garland describes. "If your hotel can't support the newest technology, then it is an inferior hotel."

According to Garland, upgrades will not only distinguish a property from its competition, but also "future-proof" the hotel. "Hotels need to try to future-proof their properties," he explains. "We decided to upgrade our structure to the point that the near future's technology cannot put a dent in our guest experience."

Prior to the upgrade, the staff at the Sheraton discovered they couldn't best serve its guests because of its low bandwidth. Many guests wanted to bring the same technology they have at home to guestrooms and meeting areas. Ultimately, the hotel rethought its technology strategy because of this demand. "We want to position ourselves in a way that allows guests to bring their office to our property," says Garland. "We want to emulate that home experience while simultaneously filling the rest of guests' needs."

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