

Leading Irish VoIP Provider Chooses Wowza Media Server™ Pro to Support Aggressive Expansion of Streaming Services



Overview Blueface, Ltd. is Ireland's largest VoIP provider. The company offers both broadband phone service throughout Ireland, and a rapidly-growing portfolio of streaming services, both audio and video. Blueface is expanding into the UK and throughout Europe with live and on-demand video, a user-generated video portal (Bluetube.ie), and more. Wowza Media Server Pro, whose scalability, extensibility, and economical pricing model give Blueface the ability to "dream big," is an important part of their expansion plans.

Challenge To support their expansion, and make full use of their extensive connectivity, Blueface needed a cost-effective streaming media server that could scale up effectively, was rock-solid in performance and availability, was affordable, and had the flexibility to enable a whole suite of new services.

Solution Blueface chose Flash® streaming with Wowza Media Server Pro Unlimited over Adobe® Flash Media Server (FMS2) due to its cost-effectiveness, scalability, reliability, and functionality.

Benefits

- The Wowza solution costs 75-80% less than Adobe FMS2, saving tens of thousands of dollars for Blueface.
- Blueface is not limited to a maximum amount of users per server—the license is unlimited, giving them more bang for their buck from their hardware investments.
- Wowza Pro's SHOUTcast re-streaming capability supports a lucrative audio streaming business for Blueface by letting broadcasters stream their content in Flash, the most accessible format on the Internet.
- The Wowza Media Server Pro architecture is extensible. With the superior support of the Wowza technical team, Blue face can "dream big" and create new products and services to keep it in the forefront of VoIP and streaming media in Ireland, the UK, and beyond.

Founded in 2004, Blueface, Ltd. was Ireland's first VoIP provider, and is now the country's biggest. The company offers both broadband phone service throughout Ireland, and a rapidly-growing portfolio of streaming services, both audio and video. The company bills itself as "the future of the phone," and, from the beginning, has backed this up with an aggressive program to build out an infrastructure that will enable Blueface to maintain its leading position and reach out to new markets.

"The economics of the Wowza Media Server Pro were almost irresistible by themselves. Add to that its rock-solid performance, and the fact that we can extend it to offer new services that make even better use of our infrastructure, and the choice was inevitable. Wowza—both the product and the company's dedication to support—puts no limits on what we can do."

**—Feargal Brady, CEO
Blueface, Ltd.**

"The VoIP business is founded on bandwidth and connectivity," says Feargal Brady, CEO of Blueface. "We've built out multiple data centers, and, through INEX, the Internet Neutral Exchange in Dublin, we're peered with all the major Irish ISPs. This enables us to deliver the best possible call quality for our subscribers, no matter where they're located."

New Worlds to Conquer

Not content to rest on its laurels, Blueface went looking for new worlds to conquer, and found a strong demand for audio and video streaming services, not only in Ireland, but in the UK and the rest of Europe. "We've built this infrastructure with tremendous bandwidth and reach, and it only makes sense to find ways to use it to deliver additional services," says Brady. "As in any business, if you stand still, someone else will run you over."

“Given the fact that Flash is already on 98% of all computers, it seemed the obvious choice to deliver audio and video.”

*—Feargal Brady, CEO
Blueface, Ltd.*

They soon decided that the best way to reach this market was Flash. “IPTV is interesting but still immature,” says Brady. “We tried Windows Media Server, but that left Mac and Linux users out in the cold, which is increasingly important in Europe. Given the fact that Flash is already on 98% of all computers, it seemed the obvious choice to deliver audio and video.”

Try It, You’ll Like It

The Blueface tech team soon found Wowza Media Server Pro, then in beta, and liked what they saw. As soon as they were able to test a production version, the team decided they had a winner. “It was a solid performer, with an economic model that was nearly irresistible, and functionality that we couldn’t get from Adobe FMS. What was especially interesting was its ability to re-stream MP3 to Flash players from the SHOUTcast feeds commonly used by radio broadcasters. This was a perfect fit with our plan to enable broadcasters to use Flash, the most accessible format on the Internet, to stream their content to much larger audiences.”

“Wowza’s scalability is everything we could ask for, and makes it far more economical than Adobe FMS.”

*—Feargal Brady, CEO
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Blueface began with Wowza Media Server Pro150, which supports 150 concurrent connections, and immediately deployed it to stream live broadcasts of NewsTalk.ie, a 24x7 live national talk radio broadcaster. This venture was so successful that Blueface promptly upgraded to Wowza Media Server Pro Unlimited, which supports a number of concurrent streams limited only by hardware capacity (allowing up to 8 cores running a single OS on a single server).

“Wowza Pro Unlimited is rock-solid,” says Brady. “Just a little while ago we streamed the Irish general election results, and the server utilization was only about 35% for about 1000 concurrent streams. Wowza’s scalability is everything we could ask for, and makes it far more economical than Adobe FMS.”

Architected for the Future

NewsTalk is only the beginning of the Blueface vision for broadband streaming. “Now that we’ve got a server and connectivity that we’re confident can scale effectively, we’re launching a major expansion of our services,” says Brady. “We’ll be offering our services to more radio broadcasters, launching an Internet TV channel with both live and on-demand programs and a user-generated video portal called Bluetube.ie, and we’re pushing all of this out into the UK, and eventually the rest of the EU. We plan to deploy additional Wowza Pro servers as we expand.”

“Working with Wowza’s responsive technical team in combination with our own world-class development team is a recipe for success.”

*—Feargal Brady, CEO
Blueface, Ltd.*

He notes that the extensible architecture of the Wowza Media Server Pro has enabled Blueface to brainstorm a number of other projects that he confidently expects will keep the company in the forefront of VoIP and streaming media for a long time to come. “We’re using Wowza to enhance our VoIP service with streamed music-on-hold capabilities,” says Brady. “Even more exciting, we’re working with the Wowza technical team to create a click-to-call softphone, which will enable our subscribers to initiate and receive calls on their computers using their browser and the Flash player. No need to download a special client—subscribers will be able to start using the service the moment they sign up!”

He adds that “this is perhaps the most exciting thing about working with Wowza. Not only does their architecture support ‘dreaming big,’ but their technical team is incredibly responsive. Working with Wowza in combination with our own world-class development team is a recipe for success.”



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