

CONNECTING PASSENGERS TO THEIR PERFECT CRUISE EXPERIENCE



From Caribbean shores to Nordic Fjords, cruises offer holidaymakers a fantastic opportunity to travel the world in comfort and style. Marella Cruises, operated by TUI UK&I, offers everything from all-inclusive trips to intimate adventures, and has a proud history of transporting passengers to over 200 destinations around the globe. On Marella's ships, travellers can enjoy features as diverse as rock-climbing walls to relaxing spas, as well as an array of dining venues and shore excursions.

MAKING THE MOST OF LIFE ON BOARD

With a company mission to help passengers discover their smile, Marella Cruises has many years of experience in the art of delivering great cruise-ship experiences with a home-from-home atmosphere across its fleet of six ships. Whether passengers are seeking sophisticated dining, West-End style entertainment, or a new adventure every day, Marella strives to provide the holiday of a lifetime with the friendliest crew at sea, and is always on the lookout for new ways to enhance their service.

Much of this – like relaxing with a massage, or enjoying the open waters – is built around helping passengers get away from it all. But in the modern world, there's no escaping the need for digital connection, even in the middle of the Atlantic. To keep things running smoothly, network access has become an important part of life onboard cruise ships. With this in mind, Marella felt the time was right to ensure it had the right infrastructure in place to support its increasing need for connectivity.

Building the infrastructure for internet access has understandably always been a challenge for cruise ships, especially once the need for network security and the power to govern passenger usage is factored in. Marella therefore needed a robust network which could support heavy usage across its ships.

Marella also knew it could significantly enhance the customer experience by offering more digital engagement. With most people now using apps and websites to find information and book services in their everyday lives, developing an onboard app was a natural next step for improving Marella's communications.

As such, Marella planned to launch a digital companion application, Navigate.

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– Rowan Stallard
Electro-Technical Manager,
TUI UK&I Marella Cruises

MARELLA CRUISES

DETAILS

CUSTOMER: Marella Cruises – TUI UK&I

INDUSTRY: Hospitality

LOCATION: UK and Ireland

SOLUTION IMPACT

- Delivery of consistent, robust infrastructure
- Roll out of new on-board app, Navigate
- Supports 2,500 users per ship, with capacity to support more than 60,000 connections to the network
- 100% plus connection concurrency for guests and staff
- Usage and bandwidth monitoring and restriction capabilities
- Greater visibility of threat data

This would help passengers to maximise their onboard experience, enabling them to access information about ship schedules and entertainment, in addition to making bookings like spa treatments, excursions and tables in Marella's a la carte restaurants.

However, Marella also wanted to offer this with no app download, over a ship-wide 'intranet' as opposed to via customer Wi-Fi. This would encourage widespread adoption of the platform, minimising the hassle and cost for passengers. All of this needed to be achieved in a secure manner, giving Marella's staff access to the network's security features.

CREATING CONNECTIVITY AT SEA

Although Marella had a clear vision for the platform it wanted to deliver, this couldn't be done without a robust infrastructure in place. Historically, connectivity and intranet services onboard cruise ships have been patchy at best, due to the limitations of delivering this service while at sea. In light of this, Fortinet and channel partner Tes Media needed to provide a flexible solution which would offer highly available coverage, even in difficult to cover areas of the ships. Fortunately, providing high-density coverage in locations like ships and shopping malls is a speciality of Tes Media, so they felt confident they would be able to deliver.

To meet this demand, Fortinet and Tes Media worked closely with Marella to plan and execute a new connectivity strategy. This was deployed smoothly in a four-week window, using over 600 Fortinet AP Access Points, a number of FWC 500D Wireless Controllers, a Wireless Manager and two FortiGate Firewalls. Fortinet has provided three ships in Marella's fleet with onboard internet and Firewall solutions, with another ship planned.

This has given Marella's ships a fault-free, high density infrastructure, in addition to supporting the delivery of the new Navigate app. This has led to widespread adoption of this platform, as passengers are able to access the content and services within the app without needing to sign up for customer Wi-Fi.

Along with Tes Media, Fortinet has allowed TUI to make the most of its existing infrastructure and helped it to plan for its digital communication strategies moving forward. It has also given IT staff the platforms and tools they need to access and govern their systems, whether that's viewing security threat data or controlling internet usage. For example, in an environment like a cruise ship, staff ideally need the power to limit usage when bandwidth is low. Fortinet has enabled this ability and more, all on an easy-to-manage interface.



GLOBAL HEADQUARTERS
Fortinet Inc.
899 Kifer Road
Sunnyvale, CA 94086
United States
Tel: +1.408.235.7700
www.fortinet.com/sales

EMEA SALES OFFICE
905 rue Albert Einstein
06560 Valbonne
France
Tel: +33.4.8987.0500

APAC SALES OFFICE
8 Temasek Boulevard
#12-01
Suntec Tower Three
Singapore 038988
Tel: +65-6395-7899
Fax: +65-6295-0015

LATIN AMERICA HEADQUARTERS
Sawgrass Lakes Center
13450 W. Sunrise Blvd., Suite 430
Sunrise, FL 33323
Tel: +1.954.368.9990