

Independence IT Erases ArtsQuest's Tech Headaches

ArtsQuest is a community-focused non-profit organization dedicated to celebrating arts and culture in Pennsylvania's greater Lehigh Valley region. Established in 1984, its flagship event, Musikfest has grown into a 10-day event with more than 500 performances and over one million attendees.

In addition to Musikfest, ArtsQuest holds a variety of other events each year, owns and operates the Banana Factory community arts center, provides arts-in-education classes and is building a \$30 million arts center that will increase its staff from 35 to 75 people in three locations.

Challenges

Each ArtsQuest event is a major undertaking. Musikfest does more than a half million dollars in merchandise sales, about \$1.5 million in box office ticket sales and almost \$4 million in food and

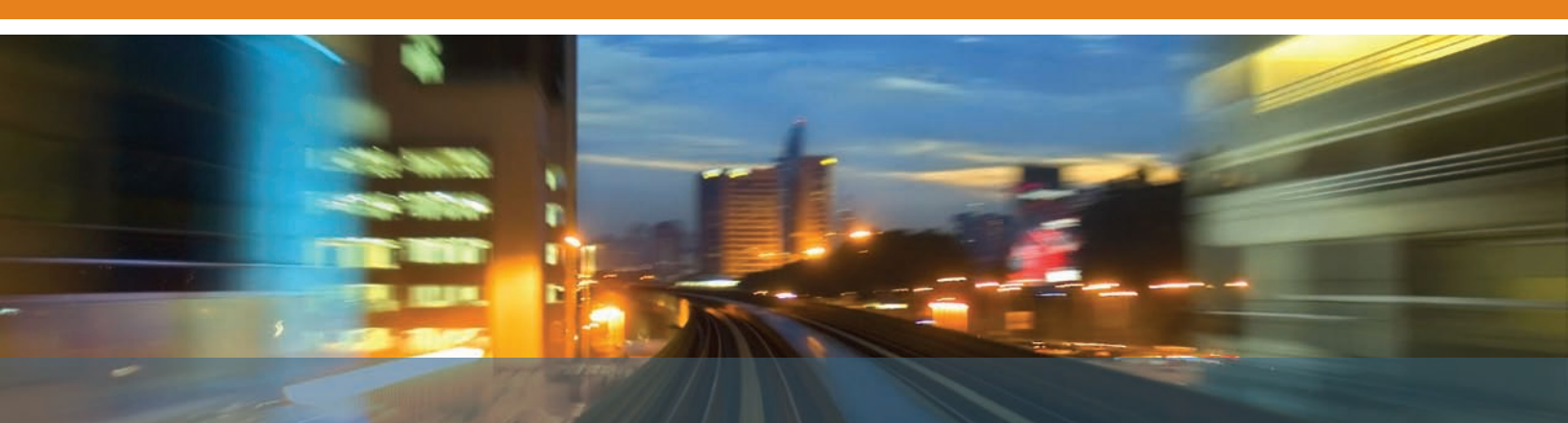
beverages; and ArtsQuest must recruit, train and provide uniforms for more than 2,000 volunteers to cover more than 10,000 shifts during the event.

With a staff that continually expands and contracts

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and operations that must move to various indoor and outdoor locations, ArtsQuest is presented with many operational challenges. Walt Keiper, senior VP at ArtsQuest has always known that a strong technology backbone is necessary to effectively run the organization and its popular events.

In the late 1990s, ArtsQuest was facing annual increases in the cost of delivering applications to its end users as well as in managing its network



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infrastructure. The organization was also moving from a cash register system to an outdoor point of sale network for its events and needed to ensure the stability of its technology environment.

"With a one person IT staff at that time, having the network up and running 24x7 and handling security as well as upgrades and maintenance was a challenge," explained Keiper. "We were worried that if our network failed with one million people at Musikfest we could no longer make sales. This wasn't something we could risk."

Solution

To address its challenges, ArtsQuest hired Independence IT in 2000 to provide its Premier Managed Desktop solution. As part of this service, Independence IT centrally manages all of ArtsQuest's applications and data and provides connectivity for all of its remote and seasonal employees.

ArtsQuest no longer needs to staff a full time IT person or purchase, maintain and replace

equipment. Its entire infrastructure is now hosted and managed at Independence IT's secure, off site data center and its IT budget is a fixed monthly cost.

"It's not only a huge savings on hardware and software, but we are also able to easily scale both up and down for pre and post festival needs," said Keiper. "Paying for only active users is definitely another significant cost savings."

"It makes sense to be hosted," said Keiper. "We can focus on our core mission to provide arts and culture to the Lehigh Valley and can leave IT issues to Independence IT. Keiper added, "As an economic engine in our community and as we continue to expand, we need a good tech backbone to keep us running. It is an exciting time and Independence IT has been a great partner."

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