



case study

altoHiway reseller,
Nouveau
transforms IT
communications
at the RSC

altoHiway takes RSC from Stage to Small Screen

Nouveau's recent deployment of the latest generation SDSL broadband technology, supplied by business ISP altoHiway, has transformed the communications link between their permanent homes in Stratford and London and delivered benefits right across the company, from stage to boardroom.

"We had approached several ISPs who did not offer the level of support we were looking for. We needed an ISP that could provide fast, efficient back up to reflect our own stringent service standards. Only altoHiway with a long track record of strong customer support, could provide this."

Andy Stevens Managing Director Nouveau





The Royal Shakespeare Company is probably the most famous classical theatre company in the world, recognised as one of the foremost UK arts brands and touring more, internationally, each year than any other company.

Over the last 40 years the RSC has produced hundreds of productions, nurturing the talent of some of the UK's leading theatrical performers including Judi Dench, Kenneth Branagh, Ralph Fiennes, Jeremy Irons, Derek Jacobi, Ian McKellen, Juliet Stevenson and David Suchet.

The Company's roots may date back to the late 19th century but the company operates with a thoroughly 21st century business outlook, with the resources, management and IT infrastructure needed to oversee some 500 staff - including craftspeople, production staff and administrators - as well as meeting the needs of its customers, sponsors and partners.

A 10-strong IT team supports RSC's day-to-day IT operations, with 2ND line support and services provided by Reading-based Company, Nouveau Solutions. The experience of the team and the close relationship with Nouveau has played an important role in supporting the development and growth of the RSC for the past 12 years.

Historically, the RSC's cultural heritage lies in Stratford-upon-Avon, yet its London office is a vital part of its national presence requiring a fast, secure reliable link between the two sites with a mission critical connection.

In May 2002, when the RSC moved from the Barbican Theatre, to new offices in Earlham Street, in London's West End, the limitations of the company's ADSL broadband connection became evident.

All of the RSC's IT applications are stored centrally in Stratford with the London base run remotely with support from Nouveau's Reading office. However, the ADSL link did not have the bandwidth to support the size and frequency of data that needed to be transferred by the sites. Moreover, the VPN link into the London office back-up which compromised the performance of the ADSL was also used for data.

An urgent upgrade was needed, with several key business factors driving this decision.

For a theatre company of the size, structure and resources of the RSC, operation sensitive data needs to be stored, backed-up and transferred as quickly as possible.

As well as performing in venues across the UK, the company regularly tours overseas, with stage sets, props and costumes frequently in transit. For production staff, a more robust, resilient connection is needed to gather and store historical data on these resources so that they can make the best use of the company's property.

Like many theatre companies, the RSC's success also depends upon establishing and maintaining relationships with key sponsors, many of whom are located - and managed - in London. As the RSC's management tool for sponsors is stored in Stratford, it is vital for staff to have improved, 'always on' links to real-time data in order to oversee these business relationships as professionally as possible.

In 2004, Nouveau upgraded RSC's broadband connectivity to SDSL - symmetrical digital subscriber line. The next step on from ADSL, this technology provides high bandwidth, in both directions, allowing data to be uploaded and downloaded at equal speeds.

The SDSL installed at Earlham Street, supplied by altoHiway, delivers a more robust business connection than ADSL and with the SLA is therefore more appropriate for business critical data, for more frequent back-ups and offered greater VPN throughput which for both offices, resulted in less downtime.

Chris O'Brien RSC Head of IT, comments:

"The SDSL connection has made a significant difference to both the speed and quality of our connectivity. We are so pleased with the connection that we are considering to migrate the entire office network to SDSL. We also benefit from a seamless relationship with Nouveau, who have a full understanding of the business critical aspects of our operations."

The solution has impacted on many aspects of the RSC's operations. The more reliable connectivity afforded by SDSL has improved the speed and accessibility of vital data on stage property, enabling staff to organise their resources in the most cost-efficient way.

Staff in London now also have improved access to up-to-date information on sponsors, ensuring communication links are maintained with important business contacts.

As the company has become more technically resilient, they are now able to fully support an educational outreach programme that demanded improved data links. In addition, the enhanced performance means the company can upload and download large graphics files to meet their growing design needs.

For the RSC's artistic directors, who are often in London for key meetings, the SDSL connection is an essential life-line, providing a live, reliable link to Stratford - enabling not only the transfer of data but also applications such as video conferencing.