CASE STUDY

TATRY MOUNTAIN RESORTS

SERVICES

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Starring at the World Cup in Jasná was Vlhová as well as the Wi-Fi network by Soitron and Cisco

"Tatry Mountain Resorts perceives the Alpine Ski World Cup in Jasná as a significant international event, and we are aware of the importance and the scale of preparations that need to take place. In a relatively short time, our IT department had to build an IT infrastructure for optical, metallic, and wireless connectivity. Achieving 100 % connectivity and making it available for the media, event partners, racing teams, and employees was a challenge that had to be taken seriously."

Libor Mach
Tatry mountain resorts, IT Operations Manager

1. REQUIREMENTS

- Provide **Wi-Fi connectivity for the indoor and outdoor areas** of the Jasná resort for the women's Alpine Ski World Cup event
- Provide **Internet access** for the entire organisational team, television crews, journalists, paramedics, and other championship participants (not including spectators)
- Provide a **LAN cable connection** in selected areas

2. SOLUTION

- Design and install a **professional Wi-Fi network** powered by state-of-the-art Cisco hardware designed for **demanding industrial environments**
- Rent approximately forty hardware units worth 100 thousand euros **for the period of the championship**

3. RESULTS AND BENEFITS

- Provided the **connectivity** necessary **for organising the world-class event**
- Ensured the **smooth operation of the championship** from the technical point of view

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When Petra Vlhová crossed the finish line in the Giant Slalom race of the Alpine Ski World Cup in Jasná and found out that she had won, she started crying. "*Honestly, I don't think I've ever experienced such emotions as I am experiencing today. It was my dream to win here, on my home course, to prove that I have what it takes to win,*" she said shortly after the race.

At that moment, not only were the emotions of the Slovak skier maxed out. The load on the LAN and Wi-Fi communication network built by Soitron and Cisco as a custom solution for the event organiser, Tatry Mountain Resorts, was also running at full capacity. Video footage of the winning race, interviews with the elated Vlhová, commentaries, and news articles were streamed to the whole world.

Having already proven its reliability and high quality, the communication infrastructure also successfully passed this final stress test. Throughout the World Cup, the Wi-Fi network was intensively used indoors and outdoors without the slightest hiccup experienced by the organisers, individual sports teams, referees, FIS officials, television crews, or journalists, who came from all over the world. The communication network was also used to broadcast video footage to large-size TV screens throughout the resort. How can we provide network coverage for sports events, festivals, and other large-scale events, and what technology is needed?

The World Cup is not your living room

In today's digital world, no event like the Alpine Ski World Cup can be organised without a high-quality communication infrastructure. However, building a temporary LAN network basically out of nothing and in a mountain environment is easier said than done.

To ensure Wi-Fi connectivity, Tatry Mountain Resorts reached out to Cisco and Soitron, a renowned provider of innovative communications networks which also provides ad-hoc rental and configuration of Wi-Fi infrastructure for such events.

"*Building a wireless network for a big event may sound easy to non-specialists, because with a few technical skills anyone can set up their own wireless router these days. However, there is a world of difference between configuring a home router and designing the right professional Wi-Fi infrastructure for industrial applications or for an event held in difficult conditions,*" says Michal Remper, Cisco Consultant System Engineer.
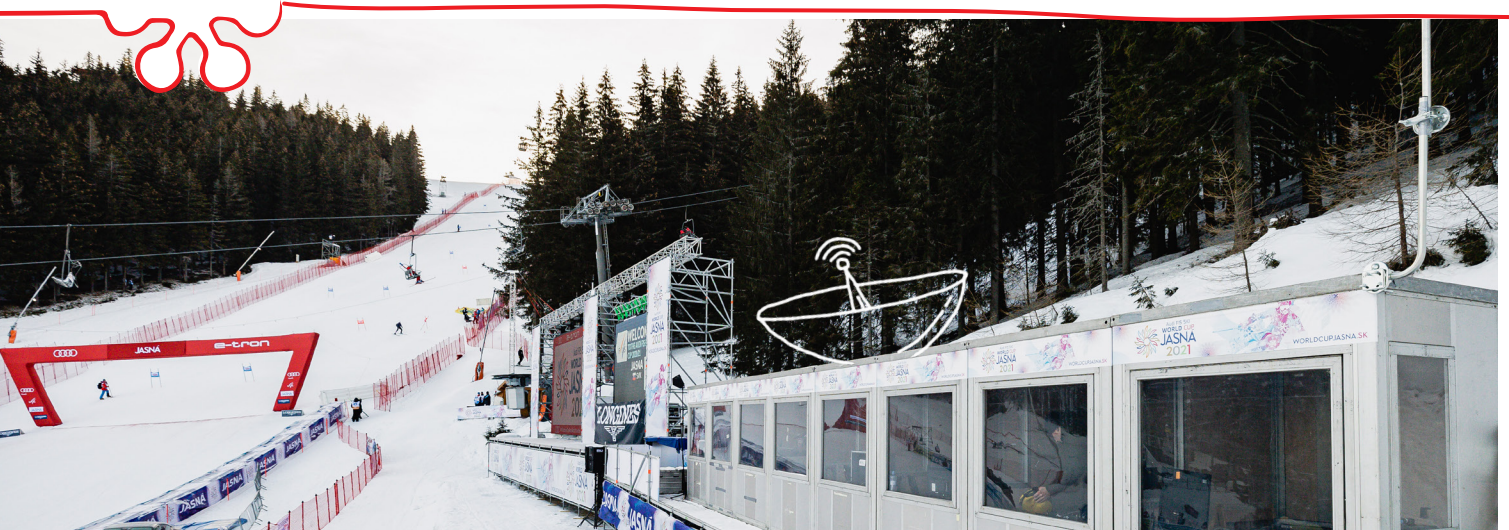
The World Cup organiser first provided a map of all event locations showing the numbers and types of people with varying requirements that would be present in each location: e.g. it was necessary for a press centre to design a wireless network for about sixty people and provide twenty-four wired connections.

"Looking back, the combination of renting top-quality Cisco technology and utilising Soitron's high expertise was a great choice that we would not hesitate to make again at any time in the future. Both companies dealt brilliantly with the limited time they had available for preparation as well as the mountain environment where the hardware was installed and configured. They definitely deserve a big thanks from us."

Libor Mach
Tatry mountain resorts, IT Operations Manager

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A tailor-made state-of-the art Wi-Fi network mosaic

Having received the specifications from the customer, network specialists were able to start designing and perform the initial configuration of the solution. The key to providing extensive Wi-Fi connectivity for the event was the selection of suitable access points and network components, provided in this case by Cisco. Also, it is important to have experience and know-how in designing and building network solutions. This allows the contractor to choose the best hardware placement and types of cabling, finetune the communication flows, and find ways to meet the specific requirements of the client; in the case of the World Cup, this meant having the option to stream the content online.

"First-class solutions need top-quality technologies and know-how as well as great team-work. Thanks to our extensive knowledge and experience from other projects, the entire design and commissioning of the Wi-Fi network took us only two days rather than one to two weeks."

Michal Remper
Cisco, Consultant System Engineer

"When choosing the right components, several criteria had to be taken into account, including humidity and temperature differences, because otherwise it could easily happen that the components would have to be covered with plastic bags in an emergency or that they would not survive low night temperatures. When providing redundancy, it is important to keep in mind that individual components must be physically available at the ski resort; otherwise, a possible outage might take an unreasonably long time to fix," explains Roland Rais, Senior Network Specialist at Soitron.

The trust of the organisers, the well-defined specifications, the ability to use state-of-the-art network components, and experts with extensive experience in building networks are all necessary prerequisites for designing and installing a reliable wireless and wired ad-hoc infrastructure.

But even all this may not be enough if one important ingredient is missing: the chemistry between people. This is the basis of the long-term successful cooperation between Soitron and Cisco. *"This is a unique congruence and understanding that that is rare to find in life. Only when people really click can they do exceptional things,"* says Rais.

Thanks to a long history of working together and the ability to constructively overcome any differences in perspective and approach, the Soitron and Cisco specialists drafted the initial design and configuration of the Wi-Fi infrastructure for the World Cup even at Jasná in a single day, even before leaving

their Bratislava offices. The subsequent layout, installation, and fine-tuning of the details at Jasná took just one more day.

It should be noted that the solution based on industrial technologies consisted of forty pieces of hardware worth 100 thousand euros, about half of which were access points. *"Thanks to our extensive knowledge and experience from other projects, the entire design and commissioning of the Wi-Fi network took us only two days rather than one to two weeks,"* adds Remper.

What could have happened

Without the high-quality hardware, know-how, and teamwork of the partners, the project would have taken longer to implement and would have also have jeopardised the reputation of the World Cup organiser as well as that of Slovakia. *"Nowadays, an Internet connection is usually taken for granted. However, providing ad-hoc high-quality Wi-Fi connectivity for a global event watched by the whole world is an extremely big responsibility,"* notes Rais.

Representatives of Tatry Mountain Resorts realised that it did not make sense to buy expensive IT hardware, which would be used for seven days and then remained unused. Also, considering the pandemic, which significantly affected their revenues due to the closure of almost all resorts in the countries where the company operates,

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they decided to seek the help of Cisco and Soitron, who are market leaders in networking and security. *"From the very beginning, this partnership gave us the guarantee that the event would be a success from the technological point of view. Moreover, it allowed us to rent the Cisco professional hardware and use the expertise of Soitron's IT specialists,"* says Libor Mach, IT Operations Manager at Tatry Mountain Resorts.

The final outcome of the effort to provide Wi-Fi connectivity for the championship may sound trivial: everything that required connectivity ran smoothly and without any problems. That means with no dropouts in displaying the timers, no malfunctioning of printers that would have made the printing of start lists and results impossible, and no connectivity limitations for the journalists, who were able to reliably broadcast and send reports on Vlhová's victory to the whole world.

> "Nowadays, an Internet connection is taken for granted. But to provide ad-hoc and high-quality Wi-Fi connectivity for a global event that is watched by the whole world is an extremely big responsibility."

Roland Rais
Soitron, Senior Network Specialist

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Tatry mountain resorts, a.s.

This company is a mountain resort operator and tourist services provider in Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Poland, and Austria. It operates mountain resorts, amusement parks, a golf resort, restaurants, hotels, sports services, and retail outlets. By improving the quality and expanding the portfolio of its services, it has the ambition to become the largest player in the tourism sector in Central and Eastern Europe. The company's head office is located in the Demänovská Valley in the Low Tatras.

www.tmr.sk
www.worldcupjasna.sk

Photo source: Archive of Tatry Mountain Resorts

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