



Customer Snapshot: Royal Caribbean International

Smooth Sailing for One of the World's Largest Cruise Line's IT Operations with Raritan's Paragon

The Challenge

While cruise vacationers swim with stingrays in the sapphire-hued waters of the Caribbean, the IT staff of each Royal Caribbean International luxury liner ensures smooth sailing by using Raritan's award-winning Paragon® KVM switch to control their two onboard data centers.

Over the past 30 years the cruise industry has boomed as cruises have evolved from a luxury trip for the well heeled to an affordable vacation for everyone, according to Keith Hopkins, Manager, IT Newbuilding Administration, at Royal Caribbean International. Royal Caribbean International is part of Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd., the world's second largest cruise company, operating the Royal Caribbean International and Celebrity Cruises brands, with 25 modern ships and a passenger capacity of approximately 53,000 berths. Royal Caribbean International is riding the wave of expansion by building four new ships, each of which adds 2,000 to 3,000 berths to its fleet, in the next three years.

As business has surged, so has the technology infrastructure associated with building and running new ships. "Our first ship had a room full of computers and other devices and now we have two highly sophisticated computer rooms on each ship," said Hopkins. The number of servers per ship has increased from four to 32. 27 of the servers are in one onboard server room while another five, in a separate room, are dedicated to interactive television guest services (events, room service, movies, and account information). Hopkins knew that the space constraints on the new ships dictated that the company change from a one-monitor to one-server approach, to one workstation accessing and controlling all of the servers onboard. But, because each room on the ship has thick steel bulkheads with limited space for cable runs, using thick VGA cable for each server would necessitate that the installation team drill additional pass-throughs in the bulkheads. Hopkins needed a solution that not only saved keyboard and monitor space, but also required a minimum of space in the cable channels. With such unique onboard requirements, Hopkins put a premium on flexibility and scalability in considering a KVM solution.

Customer:

Royal Caribbean International

Challenge:

One of the world's largest cruise lines needed a flexible and scalable KVM solution to manage two onboard computer rooms.

Solution:

Raritan's Paragon KVM solution

Benefits:

Royal Caribbean reduced staff costs, centralized server control and saved precious space on each ship.



"Paragon offered the best solution with the most functionality."

The Solution

At their state-of-the-art configuration center in Hallandale, Florida, Dominick Flores and Gary McCusker, the two Project Managers in charge of the IT Newbuild Installations, tested Raritan's Paragon KVM switch with Cat5 Simplicity™ and simulated how the product would operate onboard. "We looked at other KVM vendors on spec and determined that Raritan offered the best solution with the most functionality - all at a lower cost than our previous KVM vendor," said Hopkins. "We were impressed with how easy Paragon was to install and how quickly we had the servers up and running. The Cat5 cabling enabled us to link our two computer rooms point to point, so the systems managers could control all the servers from one location. Plus, Paragon's small 1U height eliminated the need to have a monitor, keyboard and mouse in each rack." Hopkins worked through Waveguide Communications, a Raritan authorized reseller, to deploy their KVM solutions. Waveguide Communications (www.wgc-usa.com) is a leader in fiber optics and cabling solutions for the cruise industry, land-based businesses and offshore companies.

With Paragon as the line's new control standard, Hopkins follows a set procedure to establish onboard IT operations on new ships. Once the equipment is tested, the Royal Caribbean IT team sets up the monitor wall, configures and pre-loads all servers and workstations and sends the products to shipyards in either Germany or Finland, where new Royal Caribbean ships are being built. Royal Caribbean IT Project Managers then lead an installation team that physically installs the Raritan KVM products onboard, along with all other systems on each ship.

Raritan Computer, Inc., founded in 1985, is the leading provider of KVM (keyboard/video/mouse) and remote management solutions for access and control of servers and other network devices. With 18 consecutive years of profitable growth and technical innovation, Raritan makes products that are used to control millions of servers at more than 35,000 network data centers, computer test labs, and multi-workstation environments around the world. From the small business to the enterprise, Raritan's complete line of compatible and scalable KVM and remote connectivity products offers IT professionals the most reliable, flexible, and secure out of band solutions to manage data center equipment, while improving operational productivity.

The Results

Royal Caribbean has been "onboard" with Paragon since July 2002, with its Brilliance of the Seas ship. "We have not had a single complaint," said Hopkins. Moreover, Hopkins has achieved a seven percent cost savings on each ship by reducing the staff needed to operate the equipment and eliminating the number of monitors/keyboards/mice. "We can keep our onboard IT managers in one location and centralize their functions. Now there is no need for them to walk the ship to troubleshoot any problems," said Hopkins.

The Future

Three of the four new ships Royal Caribbean is currently building will require more technology onboard. With that in mind, Hopkins is deploying the Paragon 16-user by 64-port KVM solution to handle more network devices. "We need KVM technology that is complex enough to accommodate our current and future equipment needs, yet simple enough for us to implement. Many solutions out there are too complex on both fronts - Raritan's Paragon strikes the perfect balance," he said.



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to take control,
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