

Case Study

Industry: Leisure

XBox Live



The background

Xbox™ Live is Microsoft's on-line console gaming service for the Xbox™ video game. Xbox Live enables gamers to play multiplayer Xbox games interactively with other gamers anywhere in the world over the Internet via a broadband connection.

To support the new gaming system, Microsoft planned data centres in Seattle, London, and Tokyo. Additional data centres are being established in the U.S. and other countries. The data centres, integral to the success of the gaming system, were designed with strict requirements.

The choice

To implement this important roll-out, Microsoft chose Black Box as its global cabling infrastructure services provider. The decision to use Black Box was based on a number of factors. The first was previous experience. Black Box had already worked with Microsoft on the design and installation of the Microsoft showcase data centre in Seattle, WA. The company was so impressed with the work that it asked Black Box to work on the Xbox project.

Another key factor in Microsoft's decision was Black Box's extensive worldwide operations. Xbox wanted to maintain a unified aesthetic style across all the data centres. For easier maintenance, the same equipment and materials were to be installed in all sites, as well as having the same labeling standard for all the cabling. The last requirement was a vendor who could provide services on a global basis. Black Box met all these requirements.

The data centres

As the infrastructure partner, Black Box services included planning, project coordination, installation, and maintenance of the network infrastructure at these centres. Black Box worked with the Xbox team to design the network infrastructure to be used in the first two centres, both in the Seattle area. This design became the blueprint for every subsequent data centre in the U.S. and around the world. The installations were done using Black Box® brand cabling and other premise wiring components (such as jacks, patch panels, cross-connects, and more). Because Microsoft had an extremely tight time frame of less than one month to complete the data centres, Black Box worked on both concurrently and finished the job on time.

After the successful completion of the Seattle data centres, the next Xbox projects were data centres in Tokyo and London. Both data centres followed the same design and used the same materials as the original Seattle centres. The teams in Tokyo and London worked closely with the Black Box U.S. team to coordinate the planning and installation of the centres. The on-site cabling work and material procurement were handled through the local Black Box offices. This multisite project coordination was seamless to Xbox.

Both sites had a tight three-week time frame for completion of the installation. Black Box met this in London and surpassed it in Tokyo by a week.

"I picked the best company to be our partner in this huge undertaking. I am more than satisfied with the quality of work, services, and professionalism that the Black Box team has provided to Xbox in our efforts to establish multiple data sites. I look forward to working with Black Box on all future deployments because I know the level of quality in all data centres will be extraordinary."

Nicky Pike, Program Operations Manager, Xbox Live Operations