Hewlett Packard Enterprise

Streamlined network powers community outreach

Austrian Red Cross accelerates its digital engagement through a unified network

Across the country, the work of the Austrian Red Cross will have touched most households. To enable the next generation of community engagement, the non-profit is looking to streamline how it manages network access. HPE Aruba Networking is central to its digital plans.

Digital channels to broaden community engagement

The Austrian Red Cross (ÖRK) has always depended on volunteers and close ties to the local community. The humanitarian non-profit organizes disaster relief all around the world, but also works much closer to home. Over the years, millions of Austrians have engaged with the Red Cross through blood donations, healthcare training, ambulance trips, or emergency rescue.

The ÖRK remit remains unchanged, but the way the organization operates has shifted markedly in recent years. Today's ÖRK is more digital and more mobile. In addition to face-to-face, blood donations can be organized through an app, first-responder trainings are offered as hybrid courses (where participants can complete parts of it online), and awareness campaigns rely heavily on social media.

"Digital transformation is ongoing. The general trend is towards cloud-first applications and access," says Erwin Mangeng, Austrian Red Cross IT manager for the Vorarlberg region. "Our current focus is on a new resource planning tool, creating a more flexible workforce."

ÖRK continues to have a physical presence across the country — via local branch offices and events — while at the same time embracing digital. Digital channels allow meeting the community wherever needed, from pre-school into old age. This wide-scale engagement is intended to demonstrate that ÖRK remains modern and relevant.

ÖSTERREICHISCHES ROTES KREUZ
VORARLBERG

Aus Liebe zum Menschen.

Industry: Healthcare
Country: Austria

Vision

Broaden community engagement with new digital channels supplementing the nationwide physical presence

Strategy

Unify network management to ensure that operational data is accessible, consistent, and secure for employees, volunteers, and partners

Outcomes

- Establishes a consistent view of network activity

- Enables a mobile-first, BYOD work environment

- Streamlines network management by 30%

For example, digital channels are enabling more people to volunteer at a time of their choosing, and for ÖRK to match the right volunteer skills to the right task. There is an open, online learning platform for healthcare training for all Austrians, with other courses available to registered users. Schools and students can sign up online for swimming and cycling lessons delivered by ÖRK staff. A similar platform matches volunteers with food delivery, home help, and buddying services with older people. REDpreneur is an acceleration program for social start-ups.

"This is a time of new opportunities in the purpose-driven economy," says Mangeng. "Non-profit organizations have a unique opportunity to establish themselves in the health and social service space."

Ensuring operational data is accessible, consistent, and secure

ÖRK is organized federally, across nine regions and one national unit. The nine regions are free to determine their own IT strategy. There is active communication among the nine regions and the national unit, striving to develop common strategies and standards.

ÖRK Vorarlberg, in the west of the country, is one of the smaller regions. It has 300 employees and 1,200 volunteers; its ambulance call center handles 140,000 calls a year. Like other regions, it faces the challenge of connecting its offices, employees, and volunteers. ÖRK Vorarlberg wants to ensure that operational data is accessible and consistent. Above all, this critical data must be kept secure.

"Certainly, the 2020 pandemic accelerated our acceptance of digital practices faster than ever before," says Mangeng. "This creates more work for the IT team, and we have to face the reality of our funding environment."

ÖRK Vorarlberg's response is to replace its fragmented, rigid, and manual network with a simplified network design. This unified architecture is aimed at reducing network management while strengthening edge security, from the head office to branches to homes. It is creating a modern, mobile-first work environment, where employees, volunteers, and the public can engage across multiple channels. And it is doing so on the operational budgets of a non-profit.

The new data center network architecture is based on a two-tier design (core and access), from the data center in Vorarlberg to the 17 branch locations. Each branch will have a software-defined gateway, simplifying access for thousands of users while streamlining network management.

"Our data is held centrally, and the new unified data center architecture delivers inherent security, performance, and scale," says Mangeng. "Having the same architecture in our campus and branches hugely simplifies things for us across the board."

Enabling a proactive approach to network management

The ÖRK Vorarlberg network is built on a suite of solutions from HPE Aruba Networking. It includes HPE Aruba Networking CX core and access data center switches, 9000 Series Gateways, 7200 Mobility Controllers, 500 Series access points, ClearPass, and Central. The solution was proposed, designed, and

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implemented by HPE Aruba Networking partner, CANCOM Austria AG.

"We knew Hewlett Packard Enterprise for its compute and storage, but thanks to CANCOM, we were introduced to a robust network architecture based on HPE Aruba Networking technology. This has proved to be a perfect fit for us," says Mangeng. "What impressed us was that CANCOM presented the finished concept as a unified platform with security built into its core."

The HPE Aruba Networking unified infrastructure, based on the Edge Services Platform (ESP), establishes a security-first, Zero Trust approach to connecting users and devices. The switching network is based on a single, cloud-native HPE Aruba Networking CX platform, delivering simplicity and change management to the entire network. Wi-Fi 6 connectivity is provided in all locations, from HQ to branches. HPE Aruba Networking Central then provides cloud-native management and automation, unified across the entire network.

To boost the security of the network, HPE Aruba Networking ClearPass has been deployed to provide end-to-end visibility and control on who and what connects, automating network access through robust policies.

Today, the ÖRK Vorarlberg network is more performant, stable, and efficient. Locations that could have taken three days to connect to the network are now online within hours through Zero Touch Provisioning. Configurations are pushed from HPE Aruba Networking Central; security policies are sent to each device from HPE Aruba Networking ClearPass, with automatic updates. Branch traffic is routed based on the priority of services. For example, voice uses MPLS with Internet on a lease line. This routing is policy-based and performed on the gateways.

The adoption of HPE Aruba Networking creates a proactive approach to network security and management. ÖRK Vorarlberg can now define and automate network access and has a single pane of glass for monitoring activity on its network. This hugely simplifies the task of overseeing an increasingly dynamic environment. Mangeng estimates a productivity saving of 20–30%.

"HPE Aruba Networking Central is an indispensable tool for us. It gives us an overview of the entire network, something we've never had before. It's easy to swap out hardware, to configure, and to spot issues. It's in daily use."

ÖRK Vorarlberg can now enable secure BYOD for employees and volunteers, a boon for the user experience. HPE Aruba Networking ClearPass, in combination with HPE Aruba Networking branch and headend gateways, authenticates appropriate network access for different users and devices, allowing Mangeng to dynamically segment the network.

"BYOD was something we knew we needed, but it had become a real headache for us. Now, access is simple and network security is much improved. I have far fewer sleepless nights!"

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HPE DIGITAL GAME CHANGERS

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Solution

Hardware

- HPE Aruba Networking CX 8360 Core Switches
- HPE Aruba Networking CX 6200F Access Switches
- HPE Aruba Networking 7210 Head-End Gateways
- HPE Aruba Networking 9012 Branch Gateways
- HPE Aruba Networking Wi-Fi 6 Access Points
- HPE Aruba Networking EdgeConnect SD-Branch

Software

- HPE Aruba Networking ClearPass Policy Manager
- HPE Aruba Networking Central for Network Management

Key partner

- CANCOM Austria AG

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