



Setagaya City Assembly (Japan) Case Study

Summary

Japan's national government adopted the "e-Japan Strategy" in 2001 to make the country the world's most advanced IT nation by 2005. As a result of the e-Japan Strategy, local governments including the City of Setagaya have undertaken the significant task of digitizing and distributing via the Internet all government information and services. In Setagaya, the City Assembly worked with Nippon Telegraph and Telephone East Corporation (NTT East) to select Helix™ Server software from Real® to broadcast Assembly meetings live and on demand to citizens via the Internet.

Today roughly 200 large and small local governments in Japan use software from Real to provide live coverage of Assembly meetings. The success of these deployments is leading to a variety of other applications for the technology, including gubernatorial press conferences, updates on road and environmental conditions, and tourist information.

Introduction

Through the efforts of its IT Strategic Headquarters, Japan intends to become the world's leading IT nation. The e-Japan strategy is a nationwide project aimed at making Japan the world's most advanced IT nation by 2005 and beyond.

To accomplish this goal, budget has been allocated for "the formation of advanced telecommunications networks of the highest level in the world" and "the use of telecommunications technology in the public sector." As a result, there has been widespread adoption of high-speed broadband Internet service across the country.

The total budget of the program is ¥1.5 trillion Yen (\$14.4 billion US Dollars) per year. Local governments and assemblies are placing particular emphasis on timely and open disclosure of information as well as security of information provided.

The Need

As part of their e-Japan strategy, the Setagaya City Assembly set out to provide live coverage of assembly meetings for local citizens via the Internet. This goal was considered key to providing more open assemblies and to meeting disclosure requirements mandated by the nation's Freedom of Information Act.

Security of the broadcasts was a primary concern of the City Assembly as was the ability of all citizens to view the broadcasts, regardless of their Internet connection speeds. Finally, the City wanted a solution that would scale to grow beyond simple broadcast of Assembly meetings.

The City partnered with Nippon Telegraph and Telephone East Corporation (NTT East) to find a digital media solution that would be easy to use, would provide high-quality broadcasts to citizens and would ensure the security of the media provided. The City had some previous experience with broadcasting via internal government communication systems as well as disaster videos for public information. Now they needed to bring this content – and more – to the Internet.

The Solution

The Setagaya City Assembly and NTT East chose Helix Server software from Real to begin broadcasting assembly meetings via the Internet. They began with all major assembly meetings plus budget and fiscal committee meetings. Meetings were provided live via the Internet. In addition, the meetings were recorded and posted on the government Web site within a few weeks of the meeting date and made available for one year.

For the Setagaya City Assembly, NTT East installed the first Internet delivery system of the 23 cities of Tokyo with the aim of allowing residents to view the meetings of the assembly any time, any place and in a timely fashion.

The Deployment

To address the security concerns of the City Assembly that the content might be misused (for example, copied, modified and re-transmitted), the video programming is only available as streaming content, and downloading of the video programming is prohibited. "Streaming media" refers to viewing a media broadcast directly from a server, playing back the video as it is received from the server (as opposed to downloading the video from the server to the PC and playing back locally).

Using the Helix Server, the City broadcasts Assembly meetings as low as 80 Kbps so that citizens with dial-up modems or ISDN connections can access the content. The content is encoded using SureStream™ technology. With SureStream, the City can encode a constant bit rate RealVideo® clip for multiple bandwidths. For example, they can encode a single RealVideo clip for 80 Kbps modems, 112 Kbps dual ISDN, 256 Kbps DSL, and so on. The clip's playback quality improves with each faster speed. When a viewer clicks a link to a SureStream clip, RealPlayer® and Helix Server determine which stream to use based on the available bandwidth.

The goal for the encoded video content is to provide the highest quality video possible with an emphasis placed on speakers' expressions and video detail. Setagaya citizens and government employees access the video content via the free RealPlayer, which is available from <http://japan.real.com/>. RealPlayer is the media client that is used to playback the video content provided by the City via the Helix Server.

A small staff performs live operations and editing of the recorded programs. This reduces the time-to-market of on-demand programming, keeps costs down and ensures the stability of the system.

Mission Accomplished

Since the introduction of the city's Assembly broadcasts, roughly 200 large and small local governments in Japan now use software from Real to provide live coverage of Assembly meetings. The success of these deployments is leading to a variety of other applications for the technology, including gubernatorial press conferences, updates on road and environmental conditions, and tourist information. Digital media broadcasting using Real technology will continue to play a key role in the realization of the nation's e-Japan Strategy.

Learn More

Visit the City of Setagaya Web site at <http://www.city.setagaya.tokyo.jp/kugikai/>

Visit the NTT East Web site at <http://www.ntt-east.co.jp/e-gov/>

Visit the RealNetworks, Inc. Japan Web site at <http://japan.real.com/>

About Real

Real is the global leader in Internet media delivery. It develops and markets software products and services designed to enable users of personal computers and other consumer electronic devices to send and receive audio, video and other multimedia services using the Web.

Contact Real Today

Discover how the Helix Universal Media Server from Real can help your organization simplify its streaming infrastructure, reduce costs and deliver a more reliable product. Visit us at www.realnetworks.com or contact a sales representative at **1-800-444-8011**.

