



A TECHNOLOGY PARTNERSHIP AT COMICS STATION ANTWERP

PANASONIC PROVIDES TOTAL TECHNOLOGY SOLUTION
FOR BELGIAN VISITOR ATTRACTION





Comics Station Antwerp, a new comic book themed experience centre in Antwerp, has opted for an interactive approach to bring evergreen comics into the 21st century.

To make it happen, Comics Station Antwerp needed a strong partner to provide a total technical solution and create a fully interactive experience centre that will help inspire future generations of comic readers, both young and old. That ideal partner was Panasonic.

Wim Hubrechtsen, CEO and Partner of Comics Station Antwerp: "We did not wish to become a museum with a retrospective look, but wanted to be an experience for children, for families and for friends. We wanted to find new ways of entertaining. We wanted to show the comics that have been part everybody's lives for over 70 years, which have never been more popular and that inspire all generations around the world. Our dream was to drop our visitors into the world of these characters and let them experience how they changed over time."

The right technology for the right task

To create the interactive atmosphere, Comics Station Antwerp looked for a technology partner that could provide the right solution for the task, which fitted with the total experience they wished to create. They needed to find a partner that was both committed on technology and service.

Comics Station Antwerp commissioned Panasonic to provide a total solution, from audio visual solutions to security, fire alarms, communication infrastructure and air conditioning. They needed to link all aspects together in one combined network.

"We met Panasonic at ISE 2015 and started talking about the project. We made it clear that we were not looking for a manufacturer selling products on a price list. We needed a partner that could look beyond providing a technology solution. We needed the best solution for a highly demanding environment, and for a partner to think along with us during the entire process. We wanted a one-stop shop for all technology combined with on the spot service and support, in order to realise the project within our timeframe."

Quality visual solutions with minimal downtime

From the start, Panasonic and Comics Station Antwerp worked closely together to ensure that all technical requests from Comics Station Antwerp were taken care of. When it came to visual displays and screening, Panasonic provided numerous different models projectors and displays. Comics Station Antwerp installed 22 Panasonic laser projectors and over 90 Panasonic displays with 3rd party overlay functionality, bringing touch screen capability.

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To recreate the many imaginary worlds, Comics Station Antwerp chose for Panasonic's laser projectors. That choice was guided by the manufacturer's reputation of low maintenance, proven technology and guaranteed 24/7 operation, all resulting in a low Total Cost of Ownership. In addition, Comics Station Antwerp chose to minimise the risk of downtime by maintaining a stock of replacement products. This approach reduced any possible downtime to a maximum of 15 minutes.

Hubrechtsen added: "The goal was to ensure a continuity in the projections and displays. In addition, thanks to the edge blending software from Panasonic, Comics Station Antwerp was able to create large screens on various surfaces without overlap creating a fully immersive visual environment, and making visitors dive into the world of their favorite characters."

Connected security and emergency solution

In parallel to the visual solutions, Comics Station Antwerp saw the value of using Panasonic's wide range of business products. Over 90 high end IP security cameras ensure safety for all visitors in combination with intelligent security software. The control room is equipped with Panasonic network recorders, again minimising downtime, and making the retrieval of footage fast and pain free. The cameras are combined with motion detection sensors to immediately raise an alarm when unauthorised people access specific areas of the experience centre.

These security solutions have also been integrated into the emergency plan developed by Comics Station Antwerp. It combines CCTV with the installation of a fully functional fire detection system with over 100 fire sensors spread out over the venue. This fire security solution is linked to all other technology in Comics Station Antwerp.

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Hubrechtsen: "The moment that an incident is reported, all security cameras in the area will focus on the incident and help our security manager to decide the best course of action. There is a permanent communication lines between the Panasonic phone devices on site, general alarms and evacuation messages displayed on the professional screens. In addition, the security cameras can perform a second sweep of the area with their motion detectors and Infrared sensors, to make sure the evacuation is complete."

Dedicated partner

The experience center felt the added value of a technological partnership. Advantages from the service level appeared rapidly. To help with all technology aspects, Panasonic also relied on its vast network of partners to provide resilience for Comics Station Antwerp in the case of any possible issue.

"The outcome of this partnership was not just to enjoy the fact of working with a manufacturer with high quality products. We will remember the fact of having a reliable partner, someone who helped us to realise our dream," Hubrechtsen concluded.