The San Francisco Bay area leads the world in mega commuting, with more workers traveling over 50 miles (one way) to work than anywhere else in the country. As a result, complimentary employee shuttle buses aren’t just a convenient perk for many companies, they are a strategic tool for enticing top talent in an ultra-competitive workforce.

The Media Company, for example, runs approximately 150 shuttle buses every day, which serve over 5,000 people across the Bay Area.

“Wi-Fi is a critical employee productivity tool on our buses,” said an IT representative at The Media Company. “It keeps our employees connected, which eases the stress of commuting while increasing worker productivity.”

On a given day, there are over 3,000 clients connected to the Wi-Fi network on The Media Company’s buses. Unfortunately, the company’s IT department had limited visibility into how those users were experiencing the network.

“Our biggest challenge was a lack of insight into the client mobile experience. We could see if the network was up and running, but we struggled to get meaningful information on how well the Wi-Fi was performing.”

To get better visibility into the Wi-Fi user experience, The Media Company turned to Mist.

Mist offers the industry’s only learning WLAN. The Mist cloud works in conjunction with Mist Access Points to analyze over 100 user states in real time, to identify trends, correlate activities, and proactively optimize the Wi-Fi user experience.

Mist reduces wireless operational expenditures at The Media Company using machine learning. For example, the Mist platform uses dynamic packet capture (dPCAP) to mitigate the need to reproduce Wi-Fi issues. As soon as the Mist machine learning engine detects an anomaly, it captures management and control frames that are used to troubleshoot issues.

“If a user reports a problem, my team can rewind back to the time of the incident and analyze the packet capture to identify the root cause. Dynamic PCAP reduces time to resolve problems as we no longer have to wait for the
problem to reoccur, and it drastically cuts costs as we do not have to deploy people with sniffers.”

In addition, with Mist, The Media Company can set thresholds to track key Wi-Fi service level metrics, like throughput, coverage, capacity and time to connect.

“We can easily see which users are meeting these thresholds, and determine if certain types of devices, applications or operating systems are causing persistent problems. In addition, we can quickly see if system configuration changes such as RRM adjustments to channel utilization and noise floors, had an adverse impact on the Wi-Fi experience.”

With Mist, The Media Company’s IT department can quickly identify the root cause of network issues on their shuttle buses. For example, cellular backhaul is often the cause of poor network throughput on the buses. If a user complains about Wi-Fi service on a bus, the Media Company’s IT team can quickly pinpoint if Wi-Fi is indeed the culprit, or if the issue is attributed to the cellular network, device issues, or other common problems.

Other benefits of the Mist platform at The Media Company include:

• The Mist platform reduces OPEX by simplifying operations and eliminating the need for expensive Wireless LAN (WLAN) controllers
• Open APIs let The Media Company create workflows for automation of key tasks.
• WxLAN makes policy creation and enforcement easy. For example, with the click of a mouse, The Media Company’s IT team can choose a range of applications to block on the buses, such as high bandwidth streaming and file backup.

“Mist keep things simple. It is simple for IT, and simple for our users. When it comes to network operations, there is nothing more beneficial than simplified operations.”