

D-Link Helps Pavlov Media Create Reliable Network Connections for Hundreds of Off-Campus Student Communities Nationwide

Excellent reliability, price and performance prove to be the right combination for the nation's largest private provider of internet and video services to multi-dwelling unit (MDU) communities in more than 40 states

Background:

Started in a University Illinois dorm room in 1992, and incorporated in 1994, Pavlov Media is the nation's largest private provider of internet and video services to off-campus student housing. The company's team of more than 130 people continues to expand on a national fiber optic backbone that connects hundreds of multiple dwelling unit (MDU) communities and over 156,000 residents in more than 40 states, plus Canada. Over time, Pavlov Media has earned patents on new technology and spent years developing a new way to bring very-high-speed internet and cable television to hundreds of apartments, condos and student housing sites across the nation.

The Vision: Expand reliable network infrastructure nationwide to accommodate growth of multi-dwelling unit communities

Pavlov Media's entire business is built on operating the fastest, most reliable networks available to maximize resident experiences from coast to coast. So partnering with the right provider of networking gear is paramount to their continued growth and success.

"The multi-dwelling unit market is one that demands value and reliability," said Mark Scifres, CEO of Pavlov Media. "Therefore, we choose our Ethernet equipment based on price, reliability and performance, and finally brand. Our Ethernet infrastructures need to last a minimum of 10 years, and we need hardware options for 10 Gigabit fiber distribution, IPv4/IPv6 and port security radius by MAC address authentication."

In addition to being a network designer, integrator

and installer, Pavlov Media is also a network operator—competing with companies like Comcast and TimeWarner to operate and support its widespread expanse of private networks to ensure a quality customer experience.

"Our service proposals have long sales cycles that require complex vendor coordination for network equipment models and designs that change over time," said Scifres. "This requires flexibility in both engineering and the supply chain."

For all of these reasons, Pavlov continues to purchase and rely on networking gear from D-Link.

The Solution: Gigabit Smart managed switches that provide fast data transfer speeds, advanced security and a Command Line Interface (CLI) for improved manageability

Pavlov Media's relationship with D-Link started over a decade ago—and remains strong today.

"We currently use networking gear from a number of brands, including HP, Dell, NetGear and Cisco, but D-Link remains our biggest supplier of Ethernet solutions—and has been our primary supplier for more than 10 years," said Scifres. "Not only does D-Link have an excellent technical team, it has a great pricing-to-value ratio and their products are highly reliable—whereas many other affordable products aren't."

Right now, one of Pavlov Media's favorite D-Link products is the DGS-1510 Series—a Gigabit Stackable Smart Managed Switch that offers several critical features to meet Pavlov Media's strict criteria. The DGS-1510 Series switch offers a full Command Line Interface (CLI) module

Key D-Link Purchase Drivers

Performance

Gigabit Smart managed switches from D-Link help large network operator ensure solid internet and TV connections for thousands of residents in apartment buildings and student housing properties.

Value

D-Link's affordable pricing, excellent performance and time-tested reliability help Pavlov Media extend business reach and accommodate rapid growth.

Innovation

D-Link's DGS-1510 Series switches support 10G capability, physical stacking, advanced security, Power over Ethernet (PoE) functionality and Layer 3 traffic management.

case study

(enabling switches to be easily configured), as well as 10 Gigabit uplink capability and 1 Gigabit to the desk (for fast data transfer rates), ATP PoE and MAC-based radius authorization (allowing residents to get online easily by sharing one Ethernet port).

Having the Command Line Interface (CLI) not only helps Pavlov reduce configuration time on each device—from about 45 minutes per device to about 2 minutes per device—it enables the team to back up all of the devices' configurations multiple times a day and look for changes that may affect performance. It also helps the team roll out large number of ports quickly.

"Because of the CLI, we were able to pre-script the switch configurations for all of our installations this year, enabling us to install 72,000 Ethernet ports with full security policies—all within four months," he added. "It's incredible. This would have taken a lot longer with equipment from other vendors."

The DGS-1510 switch is also helping Pavlov Media keep up with its dramatic business growth. In 2016, Pavlov Media installed a total of 72,072 D-Link Ethernet ports—a 32% increase over its 58,984 total D-Link Ethernet ports installed in 2015.

"We have a lot of momentum in the market right now, and every year we continue to add significantly to our portfolio," said Scifres. "Between 2015 and 2016, we increased our footprint by more than 17,000 beds, and in 2017 we expect to grow by another 30,000 beds."

In addition to creating new networks, Pavlov Media also takes over a number of networks from other hardware vendors, and many features needed to make networks run well don't exist on that hardware. For example, many don't support Rogue DHCP prevention (plugging routers in backwards), which can cause serious network reliability issues for property owners and managers. According to Scifres, D-Link solutions offer this important feature, as well as Denial of Service (DoS) mitigation that's better than some of the legacy solutions from other vendors.

"D-Link switches also started reporting light levels on the fiber optics, so we're able to tell if the fiber optic cable and the ports are going bad," said Scifres. "Instead of guessing, we can confirm the issue and roll a truck out to fix the fault—making proactive repairs before any type of network interruption."

D-Link in Action: High-performance switches and an excellent strategic partnership set the stage for continued performance and future growth

Not surprisingly, D-Link products are also helping Pavlov Media improve its business productivity and optimize profitability.

"We currently monitor and manage every single device on our networks and handle any incidents and troubleshooting through our 24/7 Call Center," explained Scifres. "Using the new D-Link switches has reduced our call volume, so even though the number of beds we support has increased by 30%, our call volume has actually dropped by about 5% due to the new features in the DGS-1510. There are fewer network complaints because of fewer backwards routers, and fewer misconfigurations because of the full command line interface. We've also noticed about a 10% reduction in call length."

Pavlov Media's excellent relationship with D-Link goes far beyond quality products. Because the company's sales are highly cyclical—with the majority of installations completed during the summer months—product engineers from D-Link give Pavlov Media the support it needs to plan for the future.

"Our sales planning is often one to two years out—we're currently quoting products for installation in 2018, which creates certain challenges," said Scifres. "We rely on D-Link product engineers to help us define availability and fair value for solutions that aren't even out yet. This is more complicated than you think, because over time new switches come out, product names change and other products devolve or don't exist anymore. Having the flexibility to talk to product engineers to discuss how to deliver next-generation solutions is one of the best things about working with D-Link."

Pavlov Media's preferred D-Link solutions include:

Part Number	Description
DGS-1210	10-Port Gigabit WebSmart PoE Switches including 2 Gigabit SFP Ports
DGS-1510	Gigabit Stackable Smart Managed Switches
DGS-3120	xStack Gigabit L2 Stackable Managed Switches
DGS-3420	xStack Gigabit L2+ Stackable Managed Switches
DGS-3620	xStack Gigabit L3 Stackable Managed Switches
DXS-3600	Top of Rack 10 Gigabit Managed Switches
GO-SW-8GE	8-port Gigabit Unmanaged Metal Desktop Switches

Call or visit the web address below for more information on D-Link networking solutions.

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