

## SUCCESS STORY - TRANSPORTATION INDUSTRY



### COMPANY OVERVIEW

The Italian State Railways Group, Gruppo FS Italiane, is one of the largest industrial companies in Italy, in charge for the movement of 8,000 trains daily, with approximately 600 million passengers and 50 million tons of cargo each year.

Gruppo FS Italiane provides national railway services and has always been a driving force behind technology innovation within the European rail industry.

The company is dedicated to promoting mobility and efficient transportation in Italy and abroad, as well as facilitating greater consumer access to trains.

### RECAP OF RESULTS

- Free Wi-Fi with fast, easy-to-use login
- Collection of valuable information about station visitors
- Provision of useful informative services offered by Gruppo FS Italiane and third-parties
- Creation of an open platform, available to all stakeholders – such as local police, governments and cultural organizations – that want to interact with station visitors



# Gruppo FS Italiane

## Cloud4Wi FS Italian Success Story The Wi-Life Station Project

### The Challenge

These are exciting times for travelers and commuters. The transport industry is being transformed by digital technology, with providers beginning to incorporate a wide range of digital innovations into their transport infrastructure as a way to accelerate competitiveness and respond to the growing demand from consumers for digitally-enabled travel services.

Most notably, visitors to transportation hubs such as railway stations are increasingly relying on connected mobile devices to fulfill their travel experiences – checking for timetables, looking up journey details, searching for a point of interest such as station amenities and getting directions, to give just a few examples.

Consequently, guest Wi-Fi is no longer an 'optional extra' for transport providers to consider – it's a vital element that travelers expect as standard whenever they arrive at a station.

Furthermore, train stations now cater for multiple methods of transportation and are transforming into new centers within cities, with services aimed at all station visitors. Transport providers need to respond to the new status quo by providing a great customer experience for everyone, whatever their purpose.

For Gruppo FS Italiane, this meant fast-tracking its already ambitious rail development plans, going beyond providing just basic guest Wi-Fi to stations to provide a more comprehensive suite of services to local communities.

Gruppo FS Italiane set about devising project Wi-Life Station to offer visitors a better digital experience in the station, while at the same time collecting valuable information about these visitors and their behavior, for the benefit of the various stakeholders located within the station.

Wi-Life Station aims to redesign the concept of the station, embracing the idea of a smart station in a smart city to offer an appealing digital experience in the physical space.



The Wi-Life Station project's success stems from the vision of Gruppo Ferrovie dello Stato Italiane, which was very focused on creating an innovative solution, but also made sure to involve the stations in the digital transformation process. Wi-Life Station is the result of a great team effort performed in collaboration with Cloud4Wi, Almaviva and Cisco Meraki. I am proud to see the dream of a smart station in a smart city a reality in 14 stations, where digital travelers can find services aligned with their expectations.

**Maurizio Levi**

CIO Information & Communication Technology  
Rete Ferroviaria Italiana

## The Solution

Maurizio Levi, CIO Information & Communication Technology of Rete Ferroviaria Italiana, and his team led the charge to find a solution that could make this 'smart station' a reality.

The Wi-Life Station project has been delivered in collaboration with Almaviva, an ICT company leader in the ITS (Intelligent Transportation System) sector in Italy and outsourcer for IT services for Gruppo FS Italiane.

For the hardware, Almaviva, decided to go with Cisco Meraki, an industry leader in the IT space offering a comprehensive set of cloud-managed networking devices.

"What made Wi-Life Station such a success was how well the three main entities, despite their different sizes, came together to achieve the vision. This included a large company, Gruppo FS, a system integrator, Almaviva, and a startup, Cloud4Wi," says Smeraldo Fiorentini, General Manager Transportation Division of Almaviva. "Stations are often seen as a city's first impression. Wi-Life Station is a prime example of how IoT and digital innovation can offer new, welcoming, and easy-to-use services to improve the lives of citizens, tourists, and all those who frequent the train stations and businesses of our cities."

There was an extensive search for a guest Wi-Fi platform, and ultimately, Mr. Levi chose Cloud4Wi – a well-backed start-up with a global footprint. Cloud4Wi's Volare solution is an open, cloud-based platform that can easily integrate third-party systems, which enables station stakeholders to interact with visitors. Volare integrated so seamlessly with Cisco Meraki that Mr. Levi saw this joint solution as the winning combo needed to execute his Wi-Life Station project.

The innovative Wi-Life Station solution provides station visitors with a smart Wi-Fi connection, allowing them to easily and quickly go online by accessing the Virtual Portal Station – customized for each station and available in nine languages – and logging in through their email address/ phone number or their social network account.

Beyond Internet access, station visitors accessing Wi-Fi can enjoy a range of location-based services, including a navigator, timetable, travel assistant, and map outlining various points of interest.

Wi-Life Station also allows the collection of valuable insights into station visitors and their behavior while in each station. This anonymous and aggregated information is available when station visitors are in motion in the station via Wi-Fi enabled on their mobile devices, with no restrictions on the devices' support.

Finally, Wi-Life Station enables station stakeholders to interact directly with station visitors. They can provide visitors with context-aware services – such as local event promotions – directly through the Virtual Station Portal, or they can enrich their existing mobile apps with this content while feeding back the data collected through Wi-Life Station directly into their IT systems – such as monitoring systems or business intelligence systems.

## The Results

Beginning in January 2015, the project was quickly and successfully executed despite its complex requirements. This accelerated time frame was due to several special events (EXPO 2015 and Roman Catholic Church Giubileo) that required the Wi-Fi services afforded by Wi-Life Station. Launched in May 2015, Wi-Life Station has been implemented in 14 stations and used by more than 730,000 registered users, amassing more than 10 million page views in its first year.

As a result, Wi-Life Station was named a Digital360 Award winner in the retail category in July 2016, awarded to Italian enterprises and suppliers responsible for digital projects that have achieved genuine digital business transformation.

Wi-Life Station demonstrates the opportunities for local communities that can be realized through public Wi-Fi provision, and Gruppo FS Italiane is currently rolling out the solution across the national Italian rail network.

It has redefined the station visitor experience and today provides station stakeholders with vital insights for development, management and value creation in the tourism business and other socio-economic activities that take place in and around the station.

Potential future implementations of Wi-Life Station can involve local police, incorporating their own security services within Wi-Life Stations to show safety alerts and crime reports. Local governments can promote news and local events on the main page, as well as provide services for citizens while cultural organizations can also promote their events for tourists arriving in the area.



## Main KPI's collected



**723,000**

REGISTERED USERS IN MORE THAN ONE YEAR



**14**

ACTIVE STATIONS ACROSS ITALY, INCLUDING ROME AND MILAN



**10,500,000**

PAGE VIEWS