

Oasis of the Seas: IT Helping Navigate the Cruise Ship

No person will be able to ignore the enormity of the Oasis of the Seas. You will be already overtaken by its size when you see it from the parking lot of Port Everglades in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. The Oasis of the Seas is around five times the size of the Titanic. Rising 213 feet from the water line and measuring 1,200 feet in length, it is currently the largest cruise ship in the world.



Oasis of the Seas boasts of its facilities and amenities. It has 16 passenger decks and more than 2,700 rooms. Moving up and down across the decks is made easy by its 24 passenger elevators. Weighing more than 225,000 tons, this ship can accommodate 2,100 staff and 6,300 passengers in full capacity.

Onboard the Oasis of the Seas is an open-air amphitheater. During a cruise, this amphitheater is filled with passengers who are looking for entertainment and at the same time want to feel the sea breeze. Apart from the amphitheater, the ship also features a theater that can accommodate over 1,300 guests.

The ship is not a place for couch potatoes though. Since it is very large, it effortlessly provides passengers with recreational facilities. It has a park filled with around 12,000 plants. It is possible to have a picnic in the ship. It also has an almost-a-half mile jogging track. And if you think these amenities are not exciting enough, you can try the zip line that expands 82 feet long.



Apart from these, Oasis of the Seas also has a shop promenade. For sure, you will not miss your favorite shopping mall because the promenade has almost everything out there. If you want to treat your taste buds, you can try different dishes from its restaurants. If you want to relax, you will never run out of space in the pool side because the ship has over 20 whirlpools and swimming pools.

At the very beginning, Royal Caribbean International knew that IT will play a big role in the ship design.

By integrating technology to this massive vessel, its entirety is not too overwhelming to the staff and the passengers.

In a recent tour to the Oasis of the Seas, IT officials from the Royal Caribbean International showcased how they take advantage of different tools such as handheld wireless devices, facial recognition and RFID. These tools prove themselves to be very useful for providing better passenger service, point-of-sale transactions, food safety, emergency responses and other purposes.



In an interview with Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd. Vice President for IT, Santiago Abraham, he said that they were indeed fully aware that they were building the world's largest cruise ship. Two of their main goals were to eliminate the feeling that you are on a massive ship, and to make the whole experience more intimate.

On this note, they divided the ship into several neighborhoods instead of making it appear like a single monolithic structure. Rather than giving the passengers a huge dining hall, the ship features many small restaurants. This is just one clever approach to make the passenger experience more "intimate."

Helping the passengers move around the ship is essential. So the ship builders, particularly the IT department installed digital, interactive signs. People can use these to see activity schedules, get directions, access maps and even find out the real time level of restaurant occupancy. These devices look like a flat screen TV and more than 300 of them are installed on the ship's corridor walls.

Mr. Abraham added that people have been effectively interacting through these tools on a consistent basis. On the front, these devices use Windows 7. On their rear end, they use other Windows server products as well as SQL servers. Retail and food transactions are made easy by tablets and PAR technology terminals that run through Windows Embedded OS and Agilysys.

For the staff, taking and processing orders are easier. The same goes for salespeople and waiters. Food inspection, which could take five hours with conventional thermometers and paper log system, can be done in two hours. Thanks to the devices that have RFID tags and temperature probe.

We are all aware that technology has made the world a smaller place and has helped us live our lives in a faster pace. This holds true for Oasis of the Seas, too. If you want to validate it, book a cruise in this IT-centric gigantic ship soon.

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