



# WHOLE FOODS

## CASE STUDY





## OVERVIEW

Whole Foods Market Inc. is an American supermarket chain that only sells products which meet its self-created quality standards for being "natural", which the store defines as: minimally processed foods that are free of hydrogenated fats as well as artificial flavours, colours, sweeteners, preservatives, and many others as listed on their online "Unacceptable Food Ingredients" list. The company also sells many USDA-certified organic foods and products that aim to be environmentally friendly and ecologically responsible. It has 470 stores in North America and the United Kingdom. [1]



## REQUIREMENTS

The company wanted to log and analyse visitor data to better understand the spending habits, preferred product categories, busiest time of the day/ year and the overall consumer behaviour. They were also interested in knowing which of its outlets was doing better and understand why it was so. WiFi was also to be used as a pull to attract more footfall. They also wanted a customised landing page and 24x7 monitoring.



## HOW WE HELPED

- ▶ Reduced OpEx and CapEx
- ▶ Easy tracking of number of users, bandwidth control, policy management and reporting
- ▶ Large volume of data to perform consumer behaviour analytics
- ▶ Integrated BYOD support
- ▶ Simplified and centralized network management
- ▶ A reduction in network fault calls
- ▶ Ability to remotely control, monitor and troubleshoot
- ▶ Ubiquitous Wi-Fi coverage and stronger signal
- ▶ The ability to support high density environments with more concurrent users per access point
- ▶ Access point Monitoring
- ▶ Proximity marketing

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Whole Foods deployed a High Speed WiFi network along with 3rd party hardware to capture and analyse consumer behaviour and initiate proximity marketing.

In 1978, Mackey and Renee Lawson borrowed \$45,000 from family and friends to open a small vegetarian natural foods store called SaferWay in Austin. Two years later, they partnered with Craig Weller and Mark Skiles to merge SaferWay with the latter's Clarksville Natural Grocery, resulting in the opening of the original Whole Foods Market, which included meat products. At 10,500 square feet (980 m<sup>2</sup>) and with a staff of 19, the store was quite large in comparison to the standard health food store of the time. In an effort to allow their customers full-transparency in purchasing Whole Foods Market has developed a number of in-store rating systems for various departments. The Seafood department has a Sustainability Rating System for wild-caught seafood while farm-raised seafood has to meet aquaculture standards both rated in accordance to third-party

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auditors. The Meat department has a rating system in partnership with the Global Animal Partnership based on animal welfare. The produce department has a rating system based on farming practices which include measures of a farm's environmental, GMO transparency, worker safety and wage practices. The grocery department has an Eco-scale rating system for its cleaning products which measures their environmental impact. Each system is in place to allow customers to make the most educated choices within Whole Foods Market.

Whole Foods had 470 stores worldwide, in 2017, with an annual revenue of 16.3 Billion US Dollars.<sup>[2]</sup> Morgan Stanley analyst Brian Nowak projects that total shoppers could double from 12.5 million in 2016 to 25.2 million in 2020.<sup>[3]</sup>

Whole foods realised the impact that WiFi would have on the population and was one of the earliest adopters of WiFi in commercial spaces, in 2005, when WiFi was still a novel concept. Wifi-soft deployed WiFiLan (its state-of-the-art cloudncontroller) in 400+ locations across North America and Western Europe. On an average, whole foods catered to 45000+ users that connected to their WiFi per day.

They have also experienced exponential growth in the time spent by a customer in their stores. People were usually seen with laptops in various lounging areas working and grabbing a bite to eat. This helped whole foods capture more market share by increasing the number of people visiting their stores.

The Super market chain also wanted full access to the data pertaining to the patterns of purchase of different users from different demographics and geographies, the product segments that experienced high footfall, time spent in the store or a particular section of the store, repeat customers and their buying behaviour in respect with certain promotions and overall satisfaction of the customers. A push notification was also triggered if a customer was in an aisle that had an on-going promotion. This helped inform the prospect about the promotion and increased the probability of purchase by 80%.

After the deployment of WiFi a new avenue for revenue opened up as new customers started visiting the outlets solely to access the wifi for official and recreational purposes. This lead to better data capturing and analysis

which was directly proportional to the conversions. The overall satisfaction of the customers also increased manifolds.

Moreover, the management's task of managing such an elaborate network was simplified with a single dashboard that was provided to control all the outlets from one location remotely. There was a steep decline in network related complaints, and the ones that did develop were handled with ease.

## DEPLOYMENT SCENARIO

### Reliable, Integrated and Scalable Solution

WiFiLAN is a complete, integrated solution that encompasses all the necessary features for operating remote wireless hotspots from a centralized, web-based user interface. The solution is hosted in a state-of-the-art data center and is designed to handle high-load environments. Multiple instances where WiFiLAN servers run separate hardware to handle load balancing and traffic distribution. are available Each server is capable of handling thousands of simultaneous connections and new servers can be easily added to handle increased volumes.

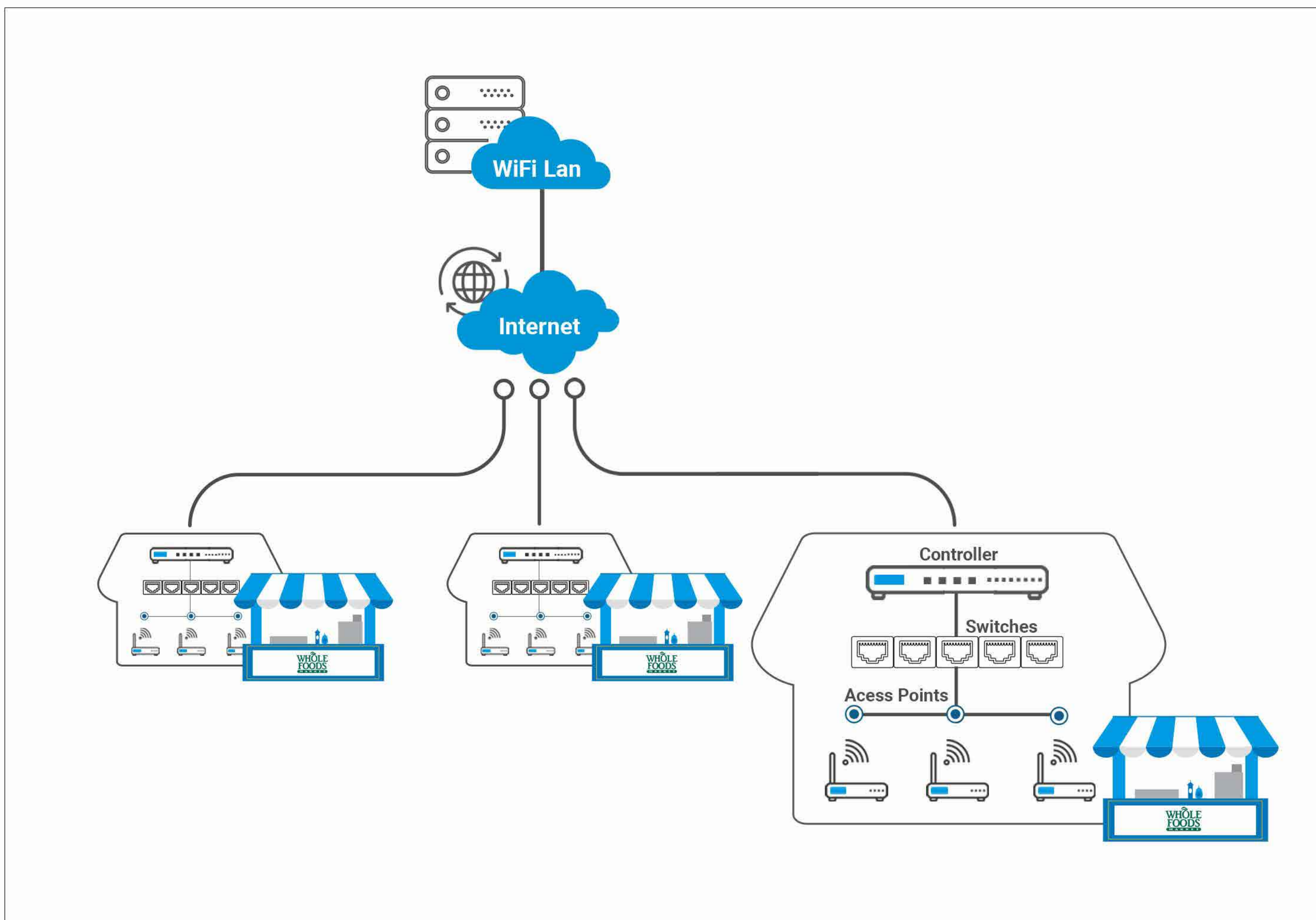


### Rich Reporting

WiFiLAN provides over 35 different reports that provide a consolidated and summarized view of accounting, billing and CRM data. Since these reports may contain sensitive information, WiFiLAN allows administrators to fine tune access control lists for each report. This ensures only valid users get access to the reports. The RADIUS reports provide statistical information for user sessions, bandwidth usage,

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online users and usage based on days of the week, hour of the day, unique sessions, session durations, etc. The Network reports provide real-time view of the network status, reliability of gateways and access points and audit reports.

### Content Filtering

Integrated, customizable content filtering solution is one of the unique features of WiFiLAN. Unlike proxy-based content filtering solutions, WiFiLAN's solution uses domain name resolution to block unwanted content from reach customer's desktop. The database of blocked content is update twice a week to make sure that new unwanted sites are blocked appropriately. WiFiLAN allows administrators to block specific domains (e.g. porn or violence) or specific sites that may be missing from the list. When users try to access the blocked content, they get redirected to a page that can be customized by the administrator.

### Location-specific Reporting

Administrators can create special accounts that have restricted access to various features in WiFiLAN. These are called "viewer" accounts since they provide a view-only interface to the account holder. This feature is especially useful for hotspot operators who want third-party users to view WiFiLAN reports and usage statistics. Administrators can customize the view-only interface with their custom brand logo and configure access based on their needs. The head-office gave view-only access to its store managers so that they could view statistical reports and customize user's experience in their stores. Administrators were allowed to customize logo and access restrictions for each individual report.

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“ WiFiLAN is integral to our operation as a hotspot service provider to our corporate customers. Our customers expect a high level of service and responsiveness for every one of their hundreds of hotspots. WiFiLAN's robust backend enables us to meet and exceed our customer's expectations.

- Murray Freeman  
CEO, Wifi-Texas, Inc.



“ I was waiting for an event to start and I wanted somewhere to sit with Wifi, and I had already had hot chocolate earlier in the day (so I didn't want to go to a cafe). So I had the great idea of going to Whole Foods! I love Whole Foods here because there's always an area to sit and chill, and it's always pretty clean. There's free Wifi too. I can spend hours just because the wigi speed is amazing. I ended up getting a bag of cookies because I wanted to eat something sweet, and it was on sale! I got to know about the sale through a pop-up message via the wifi. the technology was cool...

- Andrea W.  
Customer review on Yelp



### Citation

[1] [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Whole\\_Foods\\_Market](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Whole_Foods_Market)

[2] <https://www.statista.com/statistics/258682/whole-foods-markets-number-of-stores-worldwide/>

[3] <https://www.barrons.com/articles/how-amazon-could-double-amazons-customer-base-1505414742>

[4] <http://getfilings.com/o0001193125-05-040849.html>

[5] <https://www.yelp.com/biz/whole-foods-market-new-york-4>

[6] [https://www.tripadvisor.in/ShowUserReviews-g28970-d3896153-r217153192-Whole\\_Foods\\_Market-Washington\\_DC\\_District\\_of\\_Columbia.html](https://www.tripadvisor.in/ShowUserReviews-g28970-d3896153-r217153192-Whole_Foods_Market-Washington_DC_District_of_Columbia.html)

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