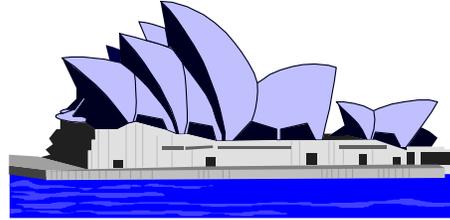


Article category: PROJECT PARADE

Sydney Olympic Games: ***A real winner!***

By Paula Schultz



And the winning project is – the Sydney Olympic Games. Right down to the after-party, Sydney set an Olympic record that will not easily be beaten. They presented a dramatic opening ceremony and excelled in all they did for the next 16 days.

On 1 October 2000, the curtain came down on one of the greatest shows ever seen. The best Olympic Games ever bowed out in style to millions of people as the A\$3-million (US\$1,7-million) fireworks spectacular lit up Sydney Harbour Bridge following a five-hour closing ceremony extravaganza – a breathtaking climax, indeed. A South African pyrotechnics team lit up the Sydney sky during the fireworks display, signalling the end of the Olympic Games. The display was synchronised to soundtracks of African music.

Nothing succeeds like success

Australians have bent over backwards to welcome the world. Critics were impressed, applauding them for their spirit and originality. Expert organisation and massive public support were over-riding impressions of an event that stands out without comparison. Despite the epic scope of the event and the massive logistical challenges, the local organisers took to these challenges with zest. The facilities built were first-rate. The timing of events could not be more precise. Security was efficient.

Considering the number of people that had to be transported, this could have been a nightmare but it was managed successfully. On any given day during the Games, up to 500 000 spectators and workers would travel to Sydney Olympic Park, more than 100 000 to Darling Harbour, and large numbers of athletes and officials to satellite venues. During peak competition this amounted to 1,2-million individual trips. In an effort to reduce unnecessary travel time, all athletes were housed in the Olympic Village adjacent to Olympic Park, and almost all competition venues were located within half-hour driving radius of Sydney Olympic Park.

IBM stands tall

Leon Uys of IBM South Africa told PROJECTPRO that when the Sydney Games opened, IBM was there to help host many of their important customers via the IBM-operated Olympic website. He said that they put together the information technology infrastructure to power the event. IBM implemented one of the most complex and sophisticated e-business systems in the world. More than 7 300 IBM PCs, 600 servers, and software from IBM, Lotus and Tivoli were deployed. They wrote more than 13-million lines of software code to handle 300 medal events in 39 venues. Remarkably, only one line of code was changed during the entire competition.

IBM hosted two of the most heavily trafficked Internet sites ever, of which the main Olympic site handled 11,3-billion hits during the Games. Peak traffic was 10 times higher than anything ever seen, topping out at 1,2-million hits a minute. According to Leon: "All that, and the entire Olympics Web hosting complex was 100% available from start to finish". The Intranet they built for 260 000 members of the Olympic family handled more than 1-million enquiries – what a feat!

Australia benefits all the way

The successful Games staged by Australia have brought them great benefits. The events provided them with significant economic advantages concerning export promotion, investment, economic growth and jobs.

Since nothing is perfect, one unfortunate event did stand out to shock the world – drugs! These were probably the most drug-ridden Olympic Games ever held. However, since some athletes remained clean throughout these otherwise untainted Games, it would be insensitive to dismiss the event as a complete scandal. The positive outweighs the negative – this is Sydney’s legacy. In good spirits, the Games brought the world together to socialise and celebrate all that is human. As the laid-back Australians would say: “Let’s have a ball, mate”. That’s why the Sydney Olympic Games 2000 are known as the Friendly Games.

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