
Wi-Fi Access Services

A Brief Review

If you travel for your business - around town or around the country - and need/want high speed Internet access for research, email, to access your home network/application data or even to integrate with a customer's Virtual Private Network (VPN) to securely access information on their network - then a Wi-Fi (Wireless Fidelity) network access service is for you.

Wi-Fi "hot spots" are popping up all over - coffee shops, shipping stores, hotels, airports - even parks and public areas sponsored by cities/communities (one of the more highly publicized implementations in Texas is the city of Austin's free Wi-Fi access service).

Wi-Fi services allow you to use your laptop or PDA combined with a wireless interface card (802.11b/g) to connect with a wireless access point provided by the Wi-Fi service provider in any number of public locations. You simply turn on your system, "find" the network and log-in (or purchase access and then log in). For owners of home-based wireless LANs - using a service is identical to using your home LAN - with the exception of the fee!

There are a number of very small Wi-Fi service providers (almost anyone could set up a service in a store or restaurant) as well as the aforementioned "free" services provided in a number of communities. But for the purpose of this article, we're going to focus on the major national/international providers of Wi-Fi services. These are the companies that supply Wi-Fi in major hotel chains, coffee shops and airports - even McDonald's!

So, without further ado - here's our quick look at the "Wi-Fi" guys!

Company	Plan	Service Charge	Comments
Boingo	Boingo Unlimited	\$21.95 per month for the first year, \$39.95 per month thereafter	Boingo currently has "hot spots" in more than 2,700 locations in 46 states with 6,000 more sites under contract
	Boingo As You Go	\$7.95 initial charge includes 2 days access, \$7.95 per day thereafter	Boingo currently has "hot spots" in more than 2,700 locations in 46 states with 6,000 more sites under contract
EarthLink	EarthLink Wireless High Speed Unlimited	\$21.95 per month first year, \$39.95 per month thereafter	EarthLink uses Boingo "hot spots" to provide their services
	EarthLink Wireless High Speed Connect-Day	\$4.95 per month for one connect day, connect days roll over for three months before expiring, additional connect days \$4.95 per day	EarthLink uses Boingo "hot spots" to provide their services
SBC	FreedomLink Unlimited	\$19.95 per month	Available in 13 states (AR, CA, CT, MI, MS, NJ, NY, OH, TX), 78 cities and 153 locations. SBC plans to expand to more than 2,000 locations by the end of 2004.
	FreedomLink 3 Sessions	\$25.00	Available in 13 states (AR, CA, CT, MI, MS, NJ, NY, OH, TX), 78 cities and 153 locations. SBC plans to expand to more than 2,000 locations by the end of 2004.
	FreedomLink 8 Sessions	\$50.00	Available in 13 states (AR, CA, CT, MI, MS, NJ, NY, OH, TX), 78 cities and 153 locations. SBC plans to expand to more than 2,000 locations by the end of 2004.
	FreedomLink 20 sessions	\$100.00	Available in 13 states (AR, CA, CT, MI, MS, NJ, NY, OH, TX), 78 cities and 153 locations. SBC plans to expand to more than 2,000 locations by the end of 2004.
T-Mobile	Unlimited National - Annual	\$29.99 per month, requires 1 year commitment	T-Mobile has "hot spots" in more than 4,533 locations.
	Unlimited National - Month to Month	\$39.99 per month, billed automatically	T-Mobile has "hot spots" in more than 4,533 locations.
	DayPass	\$9.99 per day	T-Mobile has "hot spots" in more than 4,533 locations.
	Pay As You Go	\$6.00 per hour, \$0.10 per additional minute	T-Mobile has "hot spots" in more than 4,533 locations.
Verizon	Verizon Wireless Wi-Fi Access Monthly Unlimited	\$34.99 per month	Verizon's service is widely available in a number of hotels, and other business locations - check the Verizon web site for availability.
	Verizon Wireless Wi-Fi Access Daily	\$6.99 per day	Verizon's service is widely available in a number of hotels, and other business locations - check the Verizon web site for availability.

Wayport	Single Hotel Connection	\$9.95 (prices may vary by location), unlimited guest room or common area access, valid from purchase time to check in time or midnight	Wayport has "hot spots" in more than 660 locations in the U.S. as well as Canada, the Bahamas, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Saint Kitts & Nevis and the UK. They were recently chosen as McDonald's Wi-Fi provider.
	Single Airport Connection	\$6.95, valid from purchase time until midnight	Wayport has "hot spots" in more than 660 locations in the U.S. as well as Canada, the Bahamas, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Saint Kitts & Nevis and the UK. They were recently chosen as McDonald's Wi-Fi provider.
	Prepaid Connection Cards	\$25.00 - 3 connections, \$50.00 - 8 connections, \$100.00 - 20 connections, cards are also good for \$25.00 of workstation charges at Wayport's Laptop Lane, good from purchase time until next day (hotel), midnight (airport) or two hours (McDonald's)	Wayport has "hot spots" in more than 660 locations in the U.S. as well as Canada, the Bahamas, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Saint Kitts & Nevis and the UK. They were recently chosen as McDonald's Wi-Fi provider.
	Annual Membership	\$29.95 per month, requires one year commitment	Wayport has "hot spots" in more than 660 locations in the U.S. as well as Canada, the Bahamas, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Saint Kitts & Nevis and the UK. They were recently chosen as McDonald's Wi-Fi provider.
	Month-to-Month Membership	\$49.95 per month	Wayport has "hot spots" in more than 660 locations in the U.S. as well as Canada, the Bahamas, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Saint Kitts & Nevis and the UK. They were recently chosen as McDonald's Wi-Fi provider.

Our favorite services are provided by Boingo, Wayport and T-Mobile (and they're the most prevalent!), but the pricing offered by SBC and Verizon is very competitive and watch out once they attack this market aggressively!

We've included URL's for all the companies we've outlined above. Using their Wi-Fi services can help you become more productive and "connected" as you travel across the road or the country.

Company	URL
Boingo	http://www.boingo.com
EarthLink	http://www.earthlink.net
SBC	http://www.sbc.com
T-Mobile	http://www.t-mobile.com
Verizon	http://www.verizon.com
Wayport	http://www.wayport.net