

1 :: What is Wi-Fi Technology?

A way to get Internet access, the term Wi Fi is a play upon the decades-old term HiFi that describes the type of output generated by quality musical hardware, Wi Fi stands for Wireless Fidelity and is used to define any of the wireless technology in the IEEE 802.11 specification - including (but not necessarily limited to) the wireless protocols 802.11a, 802.11b, and 802.11g. The Wi-Fi Alliance is the body responsible for promoting the term and its association with various wireless technology standards.

2 :: What does Free Wi-Fi really mean?

As the availability of Free Wi-Fi locations continues to spread I thought it might be good to review what Free might mean in different types of locations. The locations listed in the Wi-Fi Directory all offer some type of Free Wi-Fi access to the public, but sometimes there may be access requirements/restrictions that are unique to a particular type of location, and therefore the access, although free, may not be available to everyone/anyone. While accessing the Free Wi-Fi in certain locations you will be spending money to pay for a Hotel room or space in a RV Resort or for coffee in a cafe, etc. so the following information should help to clarify what Free Wi-Fi really means in different locations.

3 :: What can I do at a Wi-Fi?

The Wi-Fi wireless broadband connection allows you to do anything you'd do from home or the office. You can surf the Web, check your e-mail, connect to your Corporate network (be sure to use a secure VPN connection), make free Voice over IP phone calls, play online games, update your blog, and IM with your friends. If you just have a modem dial-up account at home you'll probably end up spending more time at the Wi-Fi once you see how much faster it is.

4 :: Is my data and e-mail secure at a Wi-Fi?

You should never conduct unsecured transactions that include any account or password information over public hotspots using FTP, email, or the Web. Try to use SSL for email (POP and SMTP), or read your email with a Web browser using an SSL connection. Ask your ISP if they offer SSL secure web-based email.

5 :: What is a Wi Fi Hotspot?

A Wi Fi hotspot is defined as any location in which 802.11 (wireless) technology both exists and is available for use to consumers. In some cases the wireless access is free, and in others, wireless carriers charge for Wi Fi usage. Generally, the most common usage of Wi Fi technology is for laptop users to gain Internet access in locations such as airports, coffee shops, and so on, where Wi Fi technology can be used to help consumers in their pursuit of work-based or recreational Internet usage.

6 :: How Can I Use Wi Fi?

You must be using a computer or PDA that has Wi Fi connectivity already working. Most portable computers can add Wi Fi using an adapter that plugs into a PC card slot or USB port.

7 :: Will I need to have an account with a Wi-Fi service provider?

Generally, no. You should be able to sign up with the provider at the location. Many providers will display instructions when browser software opens on a WiFi-enabled computer. If you don't have an account, simply start your computer and make sure your Wi Fi card is plugged on. Then, open a browser.

8 :: Is Wi Fi the same as Bluetooth?

No. While both are wireless technology terms, Bluetooth technology lives under the IEEE protocol 802.15.1, while Wi Fi falls under the 802.11 specification. What this means for consumers is that appliances using Wi Fi technology and those using Bluetooth technology are not interoperable. Bluetooth and Wi Fi are different in several ways, and are not necessarily in competition. Wi Fi technology boasts faster data transfer speeds and range, making it a good replacement for Ethernet (802.3) systems, while Bluetooth requires less power and is therefore more prominent in small appliances, such as PDAs.