

The Time has come for WiFi

What is WiFi?

WiFi, or Wireless Fidelity, is a form of high-speed, wireless communication used by computers. WiFi utilizes radio waves (instead of wires) to transmit data. There are two types of WiFi – indoor and outdoor. Indoor WiFi is more common than outdoor WiFi. Indoor WiFi is used in an office or home settings to create a local network. Just like wired networks, all of the computers connected to the network can talk to each other. However, WiFi adds mobility within range of the wireless hub (300 feet). Indoor WiFi can also be used to share an Internet connection among several computers in the same building. With the mobility and Internet sharing, one can sit on their sofa while surfing the web.

Outdoor WiFi uses antennas to broadcast a signal throughout an entire neighborhood, providing customers the ability to access the Internet in and/or around their home/business, a neighborhood park, essentially anywhere within the service area. Outdoor WiFi eliminates the "last mile" connection problems (e.g. slow installations, outages, etc.) and high costs that are usually associated with high-speed service – not to mention the hassles of dealing with a large telecommunications provider.

How fast is WiFi?

Indoor WiFi operates at speeds that are comparable to wired local networks (11Mbps). Outdoor WiFi speed varies based on the service provider and the needs of the customer (business or residence). Typically, WiFi is 20 times faster than a dial-up connection. As an example, DC Access, a Capitol Hill-based Internet Service Provider, offers a variety of high-speed WiFi connections starting at \$35 per month.

Why WiFi —not Cable or DSL?

WiFi's main difference over cable and DSL is that they use a wired network, where both voice and data share the same lines. There are many factors that can reduce the quality of your DSL and cable service. For example, even though you have high-speed broadband, you may still experience slowness or down times if there are too many people on the network. Wired connection speeds are contingent upon the number of people that are on the network and the quality of the installed wires. Additionally, DSL relies on the public switched telephony network (PSTN). In many areas, including Capitol Hill, that infrastructure is close to 100 years old. WiFi is the best choice for residents and small businesses and is far superior in speed, quality/reliability and price than any of the other broadband offerings.

Is the WiFi network secure?

WiFi has built-in security features that should be turned on in most installations. This built-in security is analogous to a locked door. It not unbreakable, but will keep out most intruders. There are additional security layers that can be implemented based on the type of network installation. As with wired networks, security is only as good as what you or your provider choose to implement. Please contact DC Access for additional information on this topic.

What is a ‘Hot Spot’?

‘Hot Spots’ are public areas that offer WiFi service, including hotels, airports, and restaurants. Recently, Starbucks and McDonalds have both announced national WiFi offerings.

Can I get a WiFi connection at my home or business?

With the right hardware, anyone can get WiFi. While the vast majority of WiFi networks are setup for indoor use, outdoor networks are popping up all over the country.

DC Access is the first and only provider to offer outdoor WiFi on Capitol Hill. Today, most residents and businesses on the Hill are eligible. Free site surveys are available and details regarding coverage and pricing plans can be found at www.dcaccess.net. Or give us a call – (202) 546-5898 – for more information.