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Wi-Fi Study: Internet access at top convention centers



News

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One of the biggest elements of attending a tradeshow is Internet accessibility. If attendees and exhibitors can't access email and social networks, the success of their tradeshow program dwindles.

Many convention centers have taken note of this aspect of tradeshows and begun to offer free Wi-Fi connections. The Anaheim Convention Center in Anaheim, Calif., for example, offers free wireless Internet access throughout the entire facility, while convention centers like the Walter E. Washington Convention Center in Washington, D.C. only offer free Wi-Fi in certain seating areas and lobbies.

"As the first group to enjoy free Wi-Fi throughout the Anaheim Convention Center, we were pleased that all our exhibitors and attendees enjoyed flawless Wi-Fi service throughout the entire venue," said Frank Boeser, director of operations, UBM Canon LLC, who exhibited at the Center in February. "No more leaving the show floor to catch up on emails, no more expensive service charges. Free Wi-Fi is a great idea; it's the future of convention center amenities."

Even international convention centers are jumping on the free Wi-Fi bandwagon. The Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Center in Australia, for instance, started offering complimentary Wi-Fi throughout the entire center in January.

"Our free Wi-Fi service makes it easy for our conferencing clients and exhibitors to not only stay connected with each other, but also keep in touch with the office," said Adrienne Reading, general manager of the GCCEC. "It's not only a medium for delegates to communicate with each other, but also a way for our staff to monitor our clients' needs during events."

Because of the many reasons and needs for Wi-Fi access, Exhibit City News has compiled a Wi-Fi study to showcase which venues are offering free Internet and where it can be found.

Convention Center	Overall size	Provider	Free Wi-Fi Areas
Anaheim Convention Center (Calif.)	1.6 million sq. ft.	Smart City	Entire venue
COBO Center (Mich.)	2.4 million sq. ft.	Managed in-house	Entire venue
Gold Coast Exhibition & Conference Center (Aust.)	Over 68,000 sq. ft.	Cisco	Entire venue
Albuquerque Convention Center (N.M.)	Over 160,000 sq. ft.	ShowTel	"Hot zones" in lobby areas.
San Diego Convention Center (Calif.)	2.6 million sq. ft.	Smart City	Ground level lobby, including restaurants
Las Vegas Convention Center (Nev.)	3.2 million sq. ft.	Smart City	All public areas
Denver Convention Center (Colo.)	Over 2.2 million sq. ft.	Smart City	All public areas
Walter E. Washington Convention Center (Wash.)	Over 170,000 sq. ft.	Smart City	Several meeting rooms and lobbies

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Convention Center (Wash., DC.)	Over 475,000 sq. ft.	Smart City	Several seating areas and lobbies
George R. Brown Convention Center (Texas)	1.8 million sq. ft.	Smart City	All public areas
Washington State Convention Center (Wash.)	Over 205,700 sq. ft.	Smart City	Client lobbies and pre-function spaces as well as the large atrium.

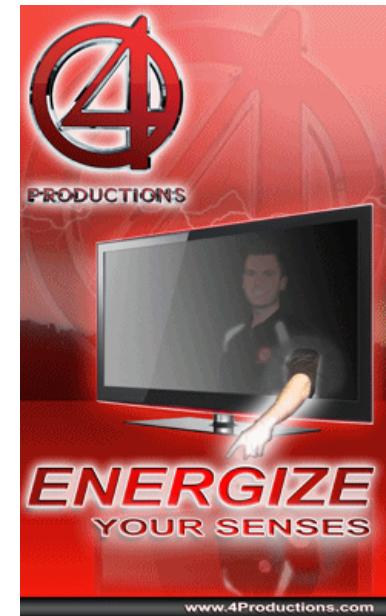
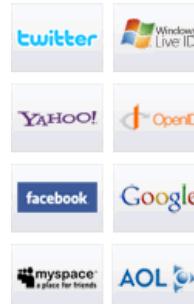
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