

Ask the Producer Column

By The Moore Presentations Team

More and more hotels, convention and conference centers are investing in “Wi-Fi” technology. In fact, more than 80 percent of hotels now offer the technology, compared to just 35 percent in 2004. In this edition, we respond to questions about this growing trend.



Dear Producers,

Question: What is Wi-Fi and how does it affect my meetings and events?

Answer: Wi-Fi technology today is similar to what a fax machine was twenty years ago – a revolution opening up doors for easier communication.

Wi-Fi stands for Wireless Fidelity and is a technological advancement that has been integrated into almost all laptop computers and PDA devices. It allows wireless internet access when located near a so-called “hotspot” and is an increasingly popular amenity offered in meeting venues, hotels, airports, public facilities and coffee houses nationwide. The technology is even offered on some buses and ferries here in the Puget Sound region.

The benefits of Wi-Fi technology for the meetings industry are abundant. With more and more attendees being

required to be in touch and on-line 24/7, Wi-Fi enabled facilities are becoming a cost-effective solution rather than a costly add-on. Wiring a meeting room with internet connections for dozens or hundreds of individuals can be both expensive and time-consuming (and ugly!). Wi-Fi connectivity allows groups, such as IT professionals or doctors, to stay connected to their offices with less interruption. Because they have easier access, they tend to be on time to events and your meeting schedule is better maintained.

Wi-Fi also provides a good way for presenters to send edits to the production team. The presenter can e-mail changes and the production team can send back edited versions for on-site approvals without hard-wire connections.

Follow-up Question: What are some of the considerations that need to be made regarding Wi-Fi?

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Answer: One major consideration is the culture of the attendee group and the industry in which they work. Certain industries and entities, such as financial services, health care and government agencies, have higher standards for information security and are sometimes more comfortable with wired connections. This is not to say that wireless technology is not secure, but just like any technology, appropriate precautions must be taken to protect confidential information.

Communication is key. Make sure your attendees connect to the proper Wi-Fi network. Encourage them to install firewalls, and use passwords and encryption whenever possible. If their company's network offers VPN (Virtual Private Network) access, use it.

Also, it is important to make sure your Wi-Fi venue offers wired connection alternatives. Some older laptops do not have wireless cards installed, precluding

them from the Wi-Fi revolution. A hotspot can go down interrupting connectivity. Or a high-level executive may insist on a wired connection to transmit highly sensitive information. It's best to be prepared.

Each issue, we try to answer your production-related questions – from logistics to creative and beyond. We find the answers and share the tricks of the trade to help you be better prepared for your next big event. No question is too small to handle. Please submit your queries to us at info@moorepresentations.com. ♦

Moore Presentations is a full-service presentation design and management company specializing in visual communications and event execution. James Moore, president of the company, has worked in video production, presentation design and event execution for more than 25 years. Mike Jorgensen, senior project director, has more than 20 years experience in multi-media technology. Terry Onustack, CMP, director of operations and marketing, spent nearly 14 years as a corporate meeting and event manager.

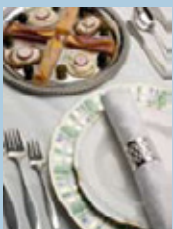


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