

## **Wi-Fi Internet Services – Hotspots for Digital India**

RailTel started WiFi broadband internet services at Railways Stations of Indian Railways. With the total project of covering 700 railway stations in the country with public WiFi hotspots, RailTel is targeting to make masses use its broadband internet services from these WiFi hotspots.

Indian Railways remains a very big mode of transport with 2.3 Cr people using Railways to commute per day on an average, it is one of the major touch points for an average citizen. Providing the commuters and local population connectivity to broadband internet services from WiFi hotspots will facilitate in the overall penetration and use of internet, thereby contributing to the development of the region. Railway Stations also serve as a prominent central location for the local population, enabling them to access the network as per need. RailTel has completed pilot projects of the same at some major Railway stations, e.g. Bengaluru, Chennai, New Delhi, Chennai, Agra, Ahmedabad, Varanasi, Howrah, CST/Mumbai, Secunderabad, BCT Mumbai & Ghazipur etc. New Delhi railway station alone caters to more than 5 lakh passengers daily; these facilities enable passengers to stay connected on the go.

RailTel uses carrier grade architecture with a 1+1 protection system, controller based access points (802.11 ac type) for automatic load sharing and balancing depending upon traffic and interference management, for the public WiFi hotspots. The network is based on fibre backhaul from the station area and gigabit switches on ring protection with abilities for remote monitoring and control with fault rectification. High capacity internet bandwidth has been provided for the facility at NDLS along with centralized NMS and billing system. In the first month of starting the service more than 100,000 users has logged in and used the WiFi internet service at New Delhi Railway Station.

The WiFi service is free for first half an hour to every user, users have to register with their mobile numbers and start the session. After first half hour the service is chargeable with options to use recharge coupons by buying them from RailTel kiosks at the railway station or recharging online. With half an hour free WiFi internet service with 2 Mbps per user connectivity, it can enable a user to do all the important online work in that time frame and if need be connectivity for more time can be bought easily.

RailTel has been exploring more possibilities in the area of providing WiFi internet at various tourist places and other public places, and is in talks with different authorities to make that happen. RailTel & DMRC (Delhi Metro) signed an MoU for providing Wi-Fi facilities in five metro stations namely Rajiv Chowk Station, Kashmeere Gate Station, Vishwavidyalaya Station, Central Secretariat Station, Hauz Khas Station. These stations are few of the busiest metro stations catering to a huge numbers of passenger daily. The Wi-Fi facility will enable them to stay connected via high speed internet on the go as access to broadband is the first step to achieve the objectives laid down under Digital India program. RailTel is also in discussion with other agencies to provide similar facility at other public places as well.

RailTel has also approached Ministry of Communications & Information Technology for financial support from USOF (Universal Service Obligation Fund) in providing Wi-Fi facility at way side stations particularly in remote areas, enabling the local population in those areas to have internet access at the local railway station.