

# Taipei Free Public Wi-Fi Access- A CyberCity

## 臺北 公眾區無線上網

### 第一階段 (室內公共場所) 啟用記者會

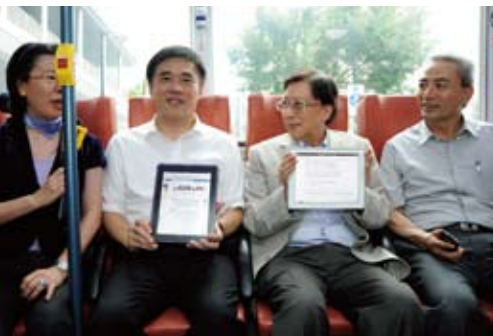
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On July 1, 2011, the Zhongxiao-Fuxing station of the Taipei MRT System attracted huge crowds to a press conference held by the Taipei City Government on "Taipei Free: Taipei Free Public Wi-Fi Access" that offer free Internet access via Wi-Fi hotspots in indoor public areas (the first stage). Taipei Mayor Hau Lung-bin made an official announcement: "Starting from July 1, 2011, the public would be able to enjoy free Internet service by connecting to 'Taipei Free' to find information while studying in the Taipei Public Library, or waiting in a clinic at the Taipei City Hospital with family members, or to check on the arrival time for MRT trains at any MRT station." The good news was applauded by the crowd on the wonderful prospect of "a bright and limitless future with city-wide wireless coverage in Taipei"



## A New City with City-Wide Wireless Broadband Coverage

### Bring out CyberCity, and An Ubiquitous and Intelligent Taipei.

To transform Taipei City into a highly competitive city internationally, the Taipei City Government has long been working on information infrastructure design, practicing the concept of “CyberCity” and a “Ubiquitous and Intelligent Taipei” Taipei residents felt particularly proud when the Taipei City started deploying public Wi-Fi hotspots way ahead of other cities around the world in 2004, which helped the City won many awards and acclaims in the international community. It became the first wireless city among other great metropolis in the world. At the Expo 2010 Shanghai, Taipei City was named “the Most Connected Urban Area” in regards to wireless broadband service that instantly became a model to other cities. However, the Taipei City Government did not rest on its laurels. As Taipei Mayor Hau Lung-bin has stated: “The most urgent task for the Taipei City Government to accomplish next is to offer to the public a more convenient, cheaper, and easier-to-use Wi-Fi Internet service.”

With the rapid development in technology, wireless Internet devices such as smart phones and tablet computers are becoming increasingly popular throughout the city. Because an increasing number of software applications (APPs) are used on mobile devices, related businesses and services have blossomed, and the public has exhibited a great demand for free wireless Internet access. In response to the citizens' demands, the Taipei City Government took the initiative by offering “Taipei Free: Taipei Free Public Wi-Fi Access” in 2011. The plan was to utilize the city's excellent wireless broadband infrastructure, offering free wireless Internet access via Wi-Fi hotspots in two stages: from July 1 in major indoor public areas, and from October 1 in major outdoor public areas within Taipei City.

For ease of use, the name of the wireless Internet access, or the “SSID”, was changed to “TPE-Free” or “Taipei Free” instead of its official name of “Taipei Free Public Wi-Fi Access”. Taipei Mayor Hau Lung-bin believes that the operation of “Taipei Free” will bring about a new wave of demand in the industry, and will thus be of benefit to the development of Taiwan's ICT industry.

## Free Wi-Fi Access, “Hotspot” Service

### More Convenient, Cheaper, and Easier-to-use Internet Service

Many residents may not have a clear idea about what “Taipei Free” is and how or why it is beneficial. Simply put, Taipei Free adopts Wi-Fi technology, which is commonly seen in almost all mobile devices, such as notebook computers, tablet computers, personal digital assistants (PDA), and smart phones. Taipei Free provides uninterrupted service in indoor public areas, and serves 24-7 all year round in outdoor public areas.

In the past, people had to worry about if they could find Internet access when they left their house or workplace, fearing the possibility of unable to access

online again that could interrupt any continuing communication or existing works. Even if they could find Internet access in unfamiliar places, it was often inconvenient or expensive. With Taipei Free, users can download at a speed of 512 Kbps, enough for sending e-mails or browsing the Internet for live information on municipal affairs and daily life no matter where they may be. To ensure smooth operation of the TPE-Free as a whole, the system does not allow access to the video and audio streaming websites during initial service period.

Taipei Free is based on the concept of “hotspot” service which means its hotspots, or wireless access points (APs) are installed at any suitable location in indoor public areas, and at public facilities such as streetlights, traffic signs, bus stops in outdoor public areas. So as long as you are near a “hotspot”, you can use Taipei Free, free of charge.

The “hotspot” service mode is based on the technical features of Wi-Fi. It is suitable for use at a designated locale within the signal coverage area, and completely different from that of the 3G/3.5G mobile communications that has wider signal coverage area with greater mobility from one coverage area to the other. Hotspot and 3G/3.5G are as different as a bus is from a taxi; the former requires you to walk to a bus stop and wait for a bus to arrive; with the latter, you can get on one at anytime and anywhere.

Currently, a great majority of the cities around the world that offer free public Internet access have adopted the “hotspot” concept. The Taipei City Government suggests that, when logging onto the Internet through Taipei Free, it is better to choose a place near a “hotspot” in which a Taipei Free sign is clearly visible and not blocked by any buildings, trees, or other artificial facilities to ensure the best access quality.

With the culmination of the above benefits brought about by Taipei Free, Taipei's vision of becoming a CyberCity has made citizens' lives better and more convenient.

## Interconnecting Taipei Free, New Taipei Wireless and i-Taiwan

### Provide Trans-regional Service for All Taiwan Residents

How can we distinguish the “indoor” public area from the “outdoor” public areas to understand when will these areas be covered by Taipei Free? Basically, the indoor public areas include the Taipei City Hall, the administration centers of the Taipei City's 12 districts, the Taipei Public Library and its branches, all of the hospitals in the Taipei City Hospital system, and every Taipei MRT stations with its underground street shopping areas. As for outdoor public areas, the service is offered based on the “hotspot” concept. There are about 600 hotspots being deployed on the main streets and roads of Taipei City and the Taipei City's eight main business districts. In addition, about 500 city bus are also covered by “Taipei Free buses” offering free Wi-Fi access. According to statistics, in 2011, there are about 1,700 Taipei Free APs providing service coverage accessible to 90% of the Taipei City's population. This puts Taipei City on the top of the “most wirelessly connected city” list above all other major cities in the world.



One of the most exciting aspects of Taipei Free is that everyone that comes to Taipei City can enjoy access to Taipei Free without any restrictions to identity. Taipei Free operates and serves based on the principle of territorialism. So everyone in Taipei City, not just Taipei City residents, but also individuals from other cities or counties who visit Taipei for business or pleasure, including foreign tourists and business travelers can get access to Taipei Free as long as in service coverage areas. Everyone can apply for an TPE-Free account on the web and through the use of SMS on their cell phones. For foreigners and mainland Chinese visitors who do not have a local cell phone number in Taiwan, they'll be able to use his/her passport or entry & exit permit to apply for an account at Songshan Airport or at any tourist information centers and over 40 major hotels in Taipei City.



On October 7, 2011, the Research, Development, and Evaluation Committee of the Executive Yuan invited Taipei City to become the first local municipalities to join the “iTaiwan” wireless network that provide free Internet access at indoor public areas in central government administrative agencies. Those who already own a Taipei Free account can use the same account name to get roaming service at over 2,500 iTaiwan APs deployed in indoor public areas of the central (and municipal) administrative agencies, which include tourist attractions, transport nodes, culture and education centers, public hospitals and public offices.

Through joining force with the “iTaiwan” network, any registered user of Taipei Free can use the same account name to get free Wi-Fi access in all of the indoor and outdoor public areas and hotspots, at every Taipei MRT stations in New Taipei City, and on any inter-city buses with Taipei Free coverage. It has proven that Taipei Free really works seamlessly throughout Taiwan!

Since Taipei Free was first implemented, the public responded positively and many people have applied for an account. By December 31, 2011, there were already 900,364 registered accounts, and an average of 881,815 user count per month in 2011. More than one million user count per month has been recorded in using the service from October to December in 2011.

## Expansion of Service to More Than 4,500 Hotspots

### Learn from Experience so to offer better Service

Because Taipei Free covers a wide range of services and the public demands high-quality in all of the service items, the Taipei City Government strive to make every improvements in Taipei Free to better serve the public. The Taipei City does this by optimizing Internet signal in both indoor and outdoor public areas, and enhancing network performance based on statistics and experiences gained in 2011.

Starting from 2012, the Taipei City Government aims to provide a more stable and thorough free-Internet access, and introduce service coverage to more and more indoor and outdoor public areas in different stages. The total number of hot spots in the Taipei City is expected to increase to more than 4,500. In addition, the Taipei City Government is considering increasing the bandwidth so users will be able to browse audio and video streaming websites, and to attract more people to experience first-hand of the convenience that brought about by the information technology infrastructure already in place at Taipei City.

With the growing trend of accessing to the Taipei Free network in Taipei City and everywhere around the country, those who haven't tried or applied for an account should take advantage of this free service. So hurry up! Apply for a Taipei Free account and join the ever growing population that comes to enjoy the convenience of Taipei Free!