



LD-5

Free Internet access zone

The mayor's technology committee of the city of Long Beach, California (461,500), has decided to provide free wireless Internet access in the city's downtown area to anyone with a laptop computer and a wireless card. The goal of the program is to enhance the city's high-technology character and help attract technology businesses. Users can obtain free access to the service anywhere on several downtown blocks and up to 20 feet inside buildings. This prevents larger businesses from using the service but offers access to patrons of downtown coffee shops and restaurants. Users of the service go through a home page that advertises local restaurants and provides local news. The city spends approximately \$5,000 a year to maintain the portal, and an additional \$4,000 for the connection, which is equivalent to a T1 line. The city is extending the service to airport waiting areas.

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