

# Why isn't wi-fi free?

 By [Chris Moerdyk: @chrismoerdyk](#)

10 Oct 2012

There are two definite trends taking place in the world today and its going to be interesting to see which of those ends up being the most successful.

On one hand airlines are starting to charge for baggage, advanced seating, on board refreshments, and even access to lavatories.

Others are adding as much value as they can. The reason is simple. They are dealing with two very different target markets. One involves passengers who don't give a damn about any extras but just want to the cheapest possible tickets.

Others don't give a damn about cost, they just want as many creature comforts and personal pampering as possible.

The trouble is that the same cannot apply to conference and exhibition venues. Right now there are those that are trying to extract as much money as possible from not only conference or exhibition organisers but from delegates who are paying top dollar to attend these events.

## Cash cow

The latest cash-cow that events venues have cottoned onto is wi-fi. It's a money-spinner because just about every delegate these days has some sort of wi-fi device and needs to use it to access emails and keep up to date with social media. Sure, it can be done on a smartphone but most delegates bring their iPads or laptops, especially if they're going to be sitting down listening to presentations all day.

I was reading a copy of *Meetings SA* the other day - it's the journal covering meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions - and in it was some interesting research conducted by the Exhibitions & Events Association of SA (EXSA)

Just looking at ten of SA's top venues, only three offered free wi-fi access. The CSIR and Misty Hills offered free access in all halls while Durban's ICC offered free wi-fi to delegates in all halls.

Cape Town's CTICC along with Gallagher, Sandton Convention Centre, and the Coca-Cola Dome, for example, all offered wi-fi access "at cost."

## ICC is tops

It comes as no surprise to me that Durban's ICC offers free wi-fi - they are probably one of the best venues in the country and clearly understand what events packaging is all about.

Wi-fi in my opinion is becoming like parking. Sounds trite and unimportant but there is nothing more annoying than going to a corporate event to find that there is no parking available other than in some side street miles away.

It's not about paying for parking - it's about the convenience of parking. I don't have a single client that does not give parking one of the most immediate priorities in choosing a conference or event venue.

The same will apply to wi-fi.

I have frequently done some homework on free wi-fi networks here in South Africa compared with the United States. Of course, the cost of our bandwidth is a lot more but frankly free wi-fi in the USA has become the norm whereas here in South Africa it is still very much an exception to the rule.

It sounds like a trivial issue, I know, but it is extremely annoying when delegates pay thousands of rands to attend a conference and end up having to pay for parking and wi-fi on top of it all. Imagine if during tea breaks they all had to pay for their cup of rooibos and a biscuit?

## ABOUT CHRIS MOERDYK: @CHRISMOERDYK

Apart from being a corporate marketing analyst, advisor and media commentator, Chris Moerdyk is a former chairman of Bizcommunity. He was head of strategic planning and public affairs for BMW South Africa and spent 16 years in the creative and client service departments of ad agencies, ending up as resident director of Lindsay Smithers-FCB in KwaZulu-Natal. Email Chris on [moerdykc@gmail.com](mailto:moerdykc@gmail.com) and follow him on Twitter at [@chrismoerdyk](https://twitter.com/chrismoerdyk).

- Covid-19 boosts trust in traditional mass media - 21 Jul 2020
- Don't listen to the post-corona marketing hysteria - 17 Jun 2020
- Let's talk about marketing after corona - 15 May 2020
- Will the mass media learn anything from Covid-19? - 28 Apr 2020
- Covid-19: Secure online advice, mentoring and workshop facilitating - 23 Mar 2020

[View my profile and articles...](#)

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>