Understanding Wi-Fi in a Convention Center Setting

The Convention Center contracts exclusively with Smart City Networks to provide wired and wireless (Wi-Fi) services in the Convention Center. Wi-Fi services are vulnerable to interference from wireless devices such as wireless routers, wireless cameras, cellular phones, and personal hotspots. These issues can be particularly acute in convention centers due to the user activity in congested areas, limited wireless spectrum, and the closed space of the exhibit halls. Excessive wireless interference in the exhibit halls, meeting rooms and auditoriums may degrade the ability of exhibitors to demonstrate their products, prevent sales representatives from placing orders, block keynote addresses being live streamed, and impede other activities. In order to maintain a stable and robust wireless environment that minimizes interference through cooperation, coordination and good wireless policies, the Convention Center has provided some tips to help keep everyone connected and maximize their efforts during shows and events below.

1. Be considerate of others.

The DECC recently underwent a $900K upgrade to the wireless infrastructure within the building; allowing up to 20,000 devices to connect simultaneously at speeds of 10 billion bits per second. However, gone are the days where one person is carrying one device. Most are carrying 2-4 devices, and each device is trying to connect automatically based on the device settings. With this number of additional devices trying to connect to the same network, it lessens the wireless experience for all. We ask that all visitors be considerate of the needs of the exhibitors, speakers and their fellow attendees. Upon entering the Convention Center, everyone is requested to voluntarily turn-off personal hotspot and Bluetooth broadcasting features of their wireless cameras, cellular phones, gaming devices and other portable wireless devices. By voluntarily disabling these features, the visitor wireless experience will be enhanced.

2. Don't overpower your neighbors.

Exhibit halls, meeting rooms, and auditoriums in the Convention Center are closed spaces where high-power wireless devices may interfere with many other wireless users. This is unfair to your neighbors and may disrupt the event. For the convenience of your fellow attendees, a wireless device that requires a continuous connection to an electric outlet (or a battery independent of the wireless device) for its operation may neither be utilized nor plugged into an electrical outlet. At the discretion of the Convention Center, the operator of such device will be required to unplug and remove the device from the Convention Center. Failure to unplug the device within 30 minutes of notification may jeopardize the wireless network for fellow attendees and is a license violation by the operator. In the event of such violation the Convention Center, at its discretion, will require the operator of the offending device to discontinue its use for the remainder of the event and/or to undertake a wireless engineering & coordination plan for the neighboring wireless devices and bill the operator of the offending device the appropriate charges. If neither option is adhered to, the Convention Center may require the operator to leave the Convention Center.

3. One user. One channel. *Please.*

For many years, Wi-Fi technology only allowed for access to one channel at a time. The latest Wi-Fi protocols (such as 802.11ac) allow users to combine or bond multiple channels. Doing so, however, may significantly degrade your neighbors' ability to use the common wireless network. For the benefit of the entire wireless community in the Convention Center, please do not monopolize the spectrum through channel bonding or other techniques.

4. Acceptable use makes it fair for all.

Please be considerate and share the wireless spectrum and bandwidth with your fellow attendees and exhibitors. Please do not use peer-to-peer traffic applications (such as Bit Torrent) nor actively scan the wireless network because these practices consume a disproportionate large amount of bandwidth and wireless network resources.