

Tall Latte, With Wi-Fi?

By William Powell

Looking for a place to quietly sip your latte and surf the Web? Well, good news, Starbucks, the popular purveyor of all things coffee, is gearing up to do the same for high-speed wireless Internet service as it did for java: Make it so good and so accessible that customers don't think twice about what it costs. The Seattle-based chain currently offers high-speed wireless Internet service, also known as Wi-Fi or 802.11b, at more than 1200 U.S. locations, with an even-

tual 70 percent of stores offering the service in the year ahead. Sounds great. The catch? Cost and feasibility.

People who want to use the Starbucks service will need to purchase a HotSpot service account from T-Mobile that runs from US\$30 to \$50 per month. Occasional users can pay as they use at a cost of \$3 for the first 15 minutes and 25 cents for each additional minute. So, total cost for a venti latte and a quick check of your email—\$6.40 including tax.

It's a daring and forward-thinking idea, especially if you're looking to keep butts in seats for the opportunity to serve up a second cup of joe. Network connections will be via a T1 line, so they're speedy enough to download streaming video, and most customers should be happy with the service. But convincing people to spend a little more for coffee is quite a bit easier than convincing the average customer to buy into a cutting-edge technology that many aren't aware exists and most aren't equipped to use.

Current reports of wireless Internet users in the United States hover around 15 million, a substantial number but still a far cry from the 187 million wired Internet users in the United States and Canada. So, for the time being, Wi-Fi appeals to a very small group of coffee drinkers. Then there are the hardware requirements, of which there's some good news and some bad news. Unless your notebook was manufactured in the last year, it's unlikely that it's equipped for Wi-Fi. So you'll need to spend somewhere in the neighborhood of US\$99 for a wireless PC card. The good news is that once you do, you have the hardware to take advantage of Wi-Fi nodes in or out of Starbucks.

To make the transition easier for Wi-Fi newbies, Hewlett-Packard has partnered with Starbucks and is offering free software that enables users to sniff out and connect to Wi-Fi networks. Another boost to Wi-Fi feasibility is Intel's slated release of the Banias chip, which will come with built-in Wi-Ficapability. The Banias line of chips is estimated to be installed in 20 million laptops this year. Less certain is a possible partnership of Intel, IBM, and AT&T to create Wi-Fi based networks in major U.S. cities. But it's in the works and, either way, judging by recent coverage, Wi-Fi is packing a bigger buzz than a double espresso. Even the

FCC is reconsidering its potential.

If you don't frequent Starbucks, don't worry, the girl in green isn't the only game in town when you need coffee and a wireless Internet connection. In fact, many privately owned shops offer it free of charge. To find the nearest cybercafe, try Cybercaptive.com

www.cybercaptive.com. It provides a cybercafe search engine with more than 6000 listings. Or you can hunt for signs of Warchalking.

In Britain, Wi-Fi user Matt Jones devised the technique of Warchalking—marking locations with open wireless networking nodes for wireless users to exploit and connect to the Internet. The process was inspired by the way hobos would leave marks on fence posts to alert others where they had a good chance of scoring free grub. Though the tactic has generated a considerable amount of buzz outside of the United Kingdom, I've yet to see any Warchalking in my travels. Keep an eye peeled for signs.

As for the success of the Starbucks venture into Wi-Fi, you can't count it out. I doubt any of us would have thought 10 years ago that we'd be spend-

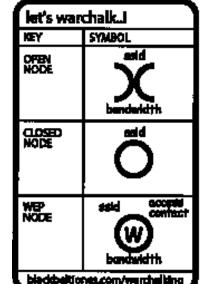
ing so much for a cup of coffee and doing it so often. As more laptops and PDAs equipped with wireless technology get into the hands of coffee drinkers, the Starbucks service just might flourish. So, if you like a latte every morning and can't wait until you get to the office to check your email, add a shot of Wi-Fi.

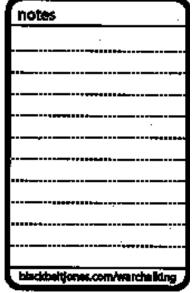
Not-So-Quick Tip

If you spend any time on the Web, chances are you've amassed quite a few Favorites, or Bookmarks as Netscape calls them. But I'd wager you're not making the most of them. To do that, consider making them your browser's homepage. No, not one of them—all of them. Here's how it works.

First, you'll need to export your favorites from Internet Explorer to a convenient location on your hard drive. To do so, click on the File menu, select Import and Export, then follow the steps provided by the Import/Export Wizard.

In the Export Favorites Destination dialog box, be sure to select Export to a File or Address. I saved my favorites to the My Documents folder and named it, what else? My Favorites. The wizard will





then export your favorites and store them in an HTML document with all of your favorite links intact. Favorites are organized in an outline format that reflects the folders or subfolders you might have created with Internet Explorer's Organize Favorites feature.

To turn your My Favorites HTML document into your homepage, just open it in Internet Explorer, go to Tools, then Internet Options, and in the Homepage section of the General tab, click on Use Current. The next time you open Internet Explorer, your list of favorites will appear.

Part 2

Exporting your favorites into an HTML document is just the beginning. The generic outline format that you wind up with is functional but not very pleasing to the eye. So, if you're feeling adventurous, try opening the HTML file you created in an HTML editor such as Dreamweaver or Front Page. Such programs will give you the ability to rearrange your links, add images and backgrounds, and create a signature look and feel that will be limited only by your know-how.

Notable duotable

"You make a CONTRACT when you make an appointment with someone. I'd never let technology distractions abuse that time."

Stephen Carpenter, CEO, Cingular Wireless (from a Fast Company interview)

Watch Words

Man's best friend can't keep a secret. No, I'm not talking about the Bush's Baked Beans ads; I'm talking about your computer passwords. Research has shown that users often select passwords that have a personal connection: the name of a spouse, child, or family pet. And those words are especially vulnerable to hackers using password-cracking dictionaries. So even if the dog isn't talking, his name might give you away.

In fact, a survey of 1200 employees of CentralNic, a U.K.-based independent global domain name registry, shows that 50 percent of employees' passwords are family related; 30 percent are influenced by celebrities, fictional characters, or sports teams.

Surprisingly, self-laudatory passwords were used by 10 percent of the employees polled. But then anyone using a password such as *babe magnet* deserves to have his computer hacked. Unfortunately, he'd only be slightly better off using *hubris*.

So, what does it take to create a secure password? Think random. Pick a nonsensical combination of upper- and lowercase letters, numbers, and symbols. Use a minimum of six characters, and never, ever, write it down. Also, try to avoid using the same password for more than one application. If that's too much to keep track of, you can always try a password storage device from companies such as MandyLion Labs

mandylionlabs.com. Its ebp Lite fits on a keychain and is secure enough for use in high-security government applications.

William Powell is an associate editor of T+D; wpowell@astd.org.

The Web covers Internet technology trends, news, and tips. Send comments, questions, and items of interest to theweb@astd.org.

It's a **Small World**

Ever wonder about the size of the Internet population? As of September 2002, Nua Internet Surveys estimates the world's Internet population to be 605.60 million. And, it's growing. Nua's May 2002 survey estimated an online population of 580.7 million. So, do a little math assuming the population continues to grow at the same rate of 4.29 percent (I figured that out with the aid of the Percentage Calculator

→ http://www.athropolis.com/popup/c-percnt2.htm), and the current online population should be somewhere around 658.68 million, give or take a few hundred thousand folks.

Curious about the Internet population in your neck of the globe? Here's a breakdown by major region as of September 2002.

World Total	605.60 million
Africa	6.31
Asia/Pacific	187.24
Europe	190.91
Middle East	5.12
Canada and USA	182.67
Latin America	33.35