

Keeping Connected When You're on the Road

by (ARA)

Whether using your laptop or cell phone, it is important for today's travelers to stay connected while on the road. Chris McGinnis, noted business travel expert and author of "The Unofficial Business Traveler's Pocket Guide: 165 Travel Tips Even the Best Business Travelers May Not Know," offers useful high (and some low) tech tips on how to keep connected and stay secure while traveling.

- * Wi-fi: If you don't have it, get it. Wireless Internet access (wi-fi) is now the killer app for frequent travelers. Most new laptops come with built in wi-fi, but if yours doesn't you can buy an inexpensive adapter card for under \$15 that will allow you to access the rapidly growing number of Internet hotspots.
- * Inquire about high speed: Always ask if high-speed Internet connections (wired or wireless) are available in your hotel. If wi-fi is offered, find out if it is accessible only in the lobby or also in your room. Check if the wi-fi service is free or if there is a charge; in the U.S. it is generally inexpensive, but overseas it can be as high as \$30/day.
- * Log on at the airport: There's nothing better than finding a wi-fi connection to the Internet when you are at the airport waiting for your flight, and it is even better when that connection is free. There are now nearly 400 airports across the country offering wi-fi service to travelers, with some offering free access, although most require a fee of \$6 to \$10.
- * People are watching: Help protect your privacy on the plane, in the airport and in other public areas where you are working on your laptop by using products like 3M Privacy Filters (www.3MPrivacyFilters.com) with "black out" technology. With the privacy filter, your laptop screen cannot be viewed from the side and you do not have to worry about "wandering eyes" stealing information off your computer screen.
- * Be careful with free wi-fi: If you are not certain who is providing the free wi-fi hotspot you are accessing, do not enter sensitive information like credit card numbers, passwords or confidential financial information. Beware of "evil twin" hotspots that simulate the look of a legitimate hotspot, and may actually provide you with a connection to the Internet, but are set up to steal your proprietary information.
- * Safer hotel rooms: Keep your electronic gear out of sight when you are not in your hotel room. Most business class hotels now offer in-room safes that are flat and wide enough to accommodate your laptop. Use them!

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