



## Wifi or not Wifi...

Nowadays, hotel guests consider that fast and reliable Wifi is essential. In a recent survey where youth were asked what they would do if they had to choose between have running water or Wifi in their room, almost all replied Wifi, even my daughters!!! In fact, many hotel guests rank Wifi higher than traditional amenities like coffee makers or comfortable beds<sup>1</sup>.

### **What is Wifi and who invented it?**<sup>2,3,4,5</sup>

Wifi is a technology that allows wireless devices such as laptops and mobile phones to access the internet. It is also known as WLAN (Wireless Local Area Network). It is difficult to name a single inventor of Wifi as its development was built on ideas and inventions from many individuals.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/impact-high-speed-wifi-hotel-guest-satisfaction-surfsonix/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.science-sparks.com/who-invented-wi-fi/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wi-Fi>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.forbes.com/sites/shivaunefield/2018/02/28/hedy-lamarr-the-incredible-mind-behind-secure-wi-fi-gps-bluetooth/?sh=1446d43641b7>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.thoughtco.com/who-invented-wifi-1992663>

- The history of WLAN stretches back more than a century to the work of **Guglielmo Marconi**, the Italian inventor who began experimenting with radio waves in 1894.
- In the 1940s, **Hedy Lamarr and George Antheil** invented a system that allowed radio waves to jump onto different frequencies. The idea was to stop the US Navy's radio signals from being intercepted by their enemy in World War 2. This was a vital step in the development of Wi-Fi.

**Fun fact:** Lamarr was not only a scientist but also a famous Hollywood actress! Born in Austria to Jewish parents, she married her first husband in 1934 at age 19. Unhappily married to a munitions manufacturer, she fled home by bicycle in the middle of the night. Lamarr caught the eye of MGM studio head on the ship from London to New York. She soon settled in Beverly Hills, socializing with affluent people like John F. Kennedy and Howard Hughes, who provided her with equipment to run experiments during her downtime from acting.

- In the 1990s, **Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO)** scientists invented a chip that greatly improved the signal quality of Wifi.
- Finally, **Vic Hayes** is often called the Father of Wifi as in 1997, he chaired the committee that introduced the international standard for wireless networking that would make Wifi feasible.

## In Hotels<sup>6,7,8,9,10</sup>

*Hyatt Hotels* and *Promus Hotel Corporation* were the first to take advantage of the Web by launching their very own websites in 1994. The first online hotel catalogue, *Travelweb.com*, also made its debut in the same year and in 1995, *Choice Hotels International* and *Promus* were the first to offer guests real-time access to central reservations. *Choice* and *Holiday Inn* were the first to introduce online booking capability – and again, it was *Choice* who was the first chain to trial in-room PCs as a standard guest amenity.

The number of phones, tablets, laptops, etc. that guests use increases every year, and the ability for guests to easily and securely connect to a fast and reliable network is a key driver of their satisfaction. The last thing that guests want is their personal information circulating on the web!

According to the *2019 Annual Customer Engagement Technology Study*, the vast majority of hotel guests (84%) report that having access to free Wifi is the biggest driver of their booking decisions. Another

<sup>6</sup> <https://hotello.com/wifi-gratuit-hotel/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.nantes-entreprises.fr/pourquoi-proposer-le-wifi-en-hotellerie/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.stayntouch.com/blog/hotel-technology-through-the-ages-1960s-2016/#:~:text=The%202000s%20%E2%80%93%20Wi%2DFi%2C%20iPhone%2C%20Apps%20%2B%20Mobile%20technology&text=While%20hotel%20Wi%2DFi%20began,views%20on%20technology%20and%20mobile.>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.hotelmanagement.net/tech/post-lockdown-how-important-connectivity-hotels>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.blueprintrf.com/hotels-free-wifi/#:~:text=Benefits%20of%20Free%20Hotel%20WiFi&text=With%20access%20to%20the%20Internet,build%20loyalty%20with%20their%20customers.>

survey by *Red Roof Inn* found that 96% of guests expect free Wifi in their hotel. Yet, 69% of guests said that slow in-room Internet connection is the most common issue with hotel networks. In response, some hotels offer free unsecured wifi and high-speed connections for a few dollars.

In short, fast, secure Wifi is a must for hotel guests. Nevertheless, the main function of a hotel is still to offer guests a good night sleep. To do so, they need to have sufficient and competent staff. However, staff shortage is the number one issue in the hotel industry. Knowing that nearly 80% of hotel workers would be more likely to stay with their current employer if their tips were increased, then it makes sense to implement an electronic tipping solution like **Tip&Go** which can increase earnings by up to 30%.

**Tip&Go** won't resolve employees' scarcity problem but it can go a long way in alleviating it!

**Francis Léonard CEO**



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