

# Carnival Corporation rolls out faster Internet

November 3 2014, by Tamara Lush

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Carnival Corporation announced Monday it will offer a long-range, broadband wireless Internet network on all of its 101 ships across nine cruise line brands.

The Miami-based cruise ship company says WiFi@Sea will use a combination of strategically located land-based antennas installed along cruise routes, Wi-Fi from a port connection and advanced satellites to offer onboard Internet.

Cruise ships currently have Internet packages and cafes, but the connectivity has traditionally been slow.

Company officials said in recent years, passengers have asked for a faster network. It also is trying to lure the tech-savvy millennial generation toward cruise ship vacations.

"In the past, people wanted to be on vacation and be disconnected," said Ramon Millan, senior vice president and global chief information officer for Carnival Corporation. "Recently we've found that people want to be connected. Knowing you have that option allows you to relax even more."

Millan said the network will be similar to a cell phone's when it changes from one data connection to another while moving across a coverage area. It's 10 times faster than connectivity previously offered on Carnival ships.

Pricing will vary by brand upon service rollout, which has already started on some ships. All of the company's ships are expected to have the new network by 2016.

Currently, most of Carnival's ships charge a \$3.95 activation fee and then sell Internet packages. On Carnival cruises longer than six days, for instance, 250 minutes is \$100. Ships also have Internet cafes with similar prices.

Carnival Corporation is the largest cruise company in the world. It's comprised of Carnival Cruise Lines, Holland America Line, Princess Cruises, Seabourn, AIDA Cruises, Costa Cruises, Cunard, Ibero Cruises, P&O Cruises and P&O Cruises.

Millan said the new Internet is also great for cruise ship workers, who often videoconference with family and friends.

Colleen McDaniel, the managing editor of the online website Cruise Critic, called this a "major step" in keeping cruise ship passengers connected.

Previously, passengers who went on cruises felt a huge disconnect while onboard ships and tried to access the Internet.

"People have gotten so used to high-speed Internet on land," she said. "This is a response to what people said they want."

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