

Cuba's new wifi hotspots attract eager users

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Cubans use their mobile devices to connect to the Internet via wifi in a street of Havana, on July 2, 2015

Near the popular Hotel Habana Libre in Cuba's capital, a gaggle of young people on cellphones, tablets and laptops log onto the new wifi hotspot—a small milestone in one of the least connected countries.

Sitting on the sidewalks, low-rise walls, or makeshift seats, several dozen people sign in at the public [access](#) wifi zone, part of the government's plan to roll out Internet access across the Communist island nation.

President Raul Castro's government has said it wants all Cubans to have Internet access by 2020.

And last month, it announced plan to open 35 public wifi sites in 16 cities, pledging to halve the price to go online.

In order to access the network, users are asked to open an account with the state-owned Etecsa company for \$1.50 and pay an hourly connection fee.

Since 2013, Cuba has had about 150 public Internet cafes where users can go online for the hourly rate.

But the price is steep in a country where the average salary is \$20 a month.

Only 3.4 percent of Cuban households had access to the network in 2013, one of the lowest figures in the world, according to the International Telecommunication Union.



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US President Barack Obama has named increased Internet access for the island as one of the goals of the historic thaw between Washington and Havana announced last December.

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