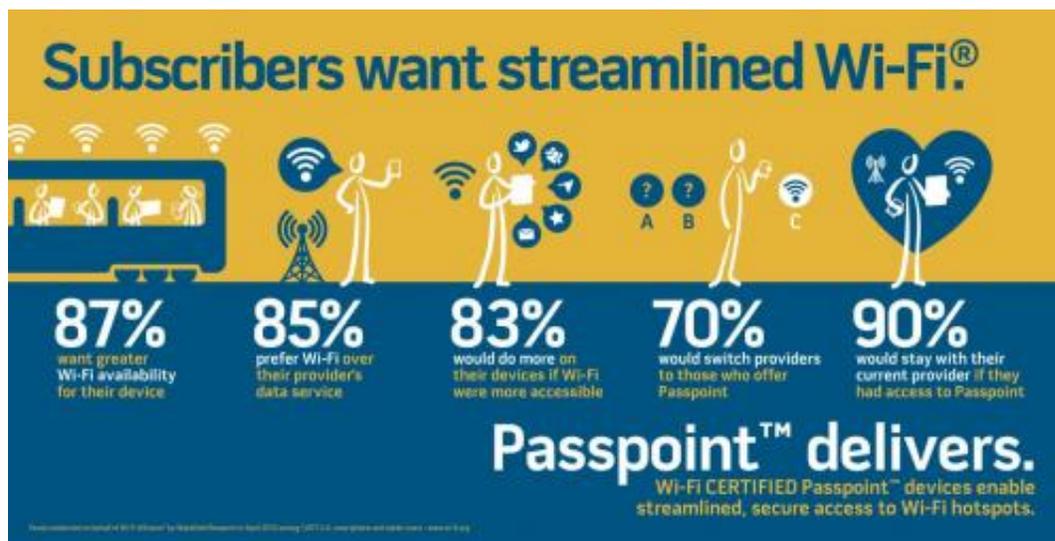


# Wi-Fi Alliance announces Passpoint program to start in June

May 9 2012, by Bob Yirka



(Phys.org) -- The Wi-Fi Alliance, an industry group bent on making Wi-Fi access more available more easily, has [announced](#) that it will begin certifying devices and hot-spot providers (using the Hotspot 2 definition) starting next month as part of its Passpoint program, whose purpose is to allow Smartphones and other mobile devices to automatically connect to Wi-Fi hotspots without having to go through a login process.

Along with its announcement, the Wi-Fi Alliance also released the results of a survey conducted by Wakefield Research on its behalf that

found that of 1000 mobile [device](#) users polled, 87% said they wanted greater Wi-Fi availability, 85% said they prefer Wi-Fi over wireless data service, 83% would use such services more if they had it, 70% would switch providers to get no-login hot-spot access and 90% would stay with their provider if they offered no-login hot-spot access.

In addition to allowing users to connect to Wi-Fi hot-spots without logging in, the Passpoint program would also institute WPA2 [encryption](#) to make using hot-spots a more secure proposition for [mobile users](#). To authenticate devices, the program relies on data obtained from the devices [SIM card](#).

While the benefits to users are easily seen, free Internet access, those for carriers are less clear. After all, if users start using [free Wi-Fi](#) more, they'll quite naturally use their wireless data service less, which would imply less profit. But, the Alliance points out, that's just the point. The big carriers are overwhelmed with data overload at this point and will likely be eager to see some traffic diverted to Wi-Fi. But, other than T-Mobile, which has been supporting the Wi-Fi Alliance since it was formed, none of the big carriers have said whether they will support the program. If they don't opt in, the Passpoint program won't have much of an impact.

On the other hand, if all the big carriers do jump in, Wi-Fi traffic from hot-spots would increase dramatically, possibly to the point that carriers might just start charging hot-spot providers by volume, which would mean the end of free hot-spots. And if that happened, a whole new addition would have to be added to the Passpoint program to allow automatic logins with individual agreements based on charges incurred from different hot-spot providers.

This announcement by the Wi-Fi Alliance comes nearly at the same time as a new revision to IEEE's 802.11 WiFi standard has been approved

that will allow for faster devices and an improvement in handoff technology. The Alliance said the new revisions are already incorporated into the Passpoint certification program.

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