

Cable cos to share access on 50,000 Wi-Fi hotspots

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(AP) -- Cable TV companies are trying to give their customers another reason not to cancel their service: better access to Wi-Fi hotspots.

Five major operators with nearly 40 million broadband subscribers said Monday that they would let each other's customers access more than 50,000 Wi-Fi hotspots nationwide for no extra charge beyond their monthly bill.

The initiative adds Internet customers of Cox Communications and Bright House Networks to an existing deal between Comcast Corp., Time Warner Cable Inc. and [Cablevision Systems Corp.](#)

The hotspots are in New York City and the surrounding area; Los Angeles; Tampa, Fla.; Orlando, Fla.; and Philadelphia. Customers can search for the network called "CableWiFi" and log in using the same credentials as when they use the Wi-Fi hotspots of their Internet service provider. For some people, that means using the email address and password for their cable service account.

[Cable TV companies](#) have been battling to retain video customers as more people watch TV shows and movies over the Internet and through DVD rental services such as [Netflix Inc.](#) The companies have found growth instead in their high-speed Internet offerings.

Wi-Fi use is booming as more people have smartphones and tablet computers such as the iPad but don't want to exceed the cap on their

cellular data plans.

At an industry trade show in Boston on Monday, [Time Warner Cable](#) Inc. CEO Glenn Britt said most Internet data used on tablets comes through Wi-Fi networks, not cellular networks.

Cablevision said the number of times customers use its Optimum Wi-Fi network in the New York area is expected to nearly double to 350 million this year.

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