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Travel without getting stranded offline

By Sue Bowness, posted 8/8/2003 2:23:00 PM



Maybe the novelty of finally making the leap from desktop to laptop hasn't worn off for me yet, but I love the thought that I can travel anywhere and still connect to the Internet. With my new powers of mobility, I am ready to plunk myself down at a hotel halfway across the country and just plug in. And yet one question remains -- are those hotels ready for me?

An informal survey of various major hotels in Toronto tells me that

has all of its rooms hooked up with free local high-speed Internet access 24 hours a day and a business centre for faxes and

are somewhere in between: Some hotels offer public computers; others don't. Some provide free local Internet access; others charge by the day, the minute or the connection.

As Rod Seiling, president of the Greater Toronto Hotel Association points out, getting wired is an individual business decision made by

looking for certain services, they will provide them." Andrea Myer, editor of the Hotel Association of Canada publication Roomers,

demand. "Hotels that cater to business travelers are going to be the

hotel.

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If the prospect of calling up all of the approximately 7,800 hotels,

you could try searching the Web sites of the major chains or the tourism associations. Or another strategy is to search the various high-speed Internet services used by the wired hotel chains instead. Companies like Montreal-based TravelNet Technologies (www.travelnet.ca) or U.S.-based STSN (www.stsn.com) and GlobalNet (www.guest-tek.com) provide a listing of hotels that use their services. Where services are available, the specs seem decent. STSN, whose

service package on its Web site: Smart boxes in each room for

front desk.

The present offering may be somewhat uneven, but the future seems chip, Centrino, which conforms to 802.11 Wi-Fi networking standards

conference rooms and other public spaces. In Canada, several companies are also in the business. TravelNet Technologies announced plans last November to provide its DataValet wireless services to 17 of Air Canada's Maple Leaf Lounges across Canada.

National Trade Show and Convention Centre.

So, with reservations (pardon the pun) I'd have to say it seems the laptop. But calling ahead still seems like a good idea.

By *SUE BOWNESS*

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