

Sharing Wi-Fi on the tube



Nathan Pearce, 2012-20-03

So it's official, free Wi-Fi in tube stations and platforms in time for the Olympics will be provided by Virgin. This move is going to be welcomed by many Tube users, enabling them to surf the web, access emails and do their shopping online while waiting for their next train.

The Wi-Fi will be accessible to both staff and passengers and consequently may also carry communications between employees on the platform and those in the control room. With staff and the general public sharing Wi-Fi access, there are a few obvious security and technical concerns.

The two main implications for staff and consumers sharing Wi-Fi are security and availability. It's absolutely imperative that staff can continue to communicate and access both internal and external resources however many consumers are logged onto the Wi-Fi. A number of the conversations between staff will also be confidential, so these Wi-Fi streams must not only be available, but also separate and secure.

The simplest way to accomplish this is to take a two-tier approach. TfL could segment the available bandwidth from the routers between staff and the general public, using a policy to define these amounts, based on availability. In terms of security, whilst the public should enjoy reasonably open Wi-Fi access, staff should connect via SSL VPNs, whereby all traffic is encrypted and each user has their own secure tunnel.

Wi-Fi on the London underground will be a huge asset to the city before, during and after the Olympics, and as long as a few straightforward steps are followed, it should enhance the lives of both commuters and tourists significantly.

F5 Networks, Inc. | 401 Elliot Avenue West, Seattle, WA 98119 | 888-882-4447 | f5.com

F5 Networks, Inc.
Corporate Headquarters
info@f5.com

F5 Networks
Asia-Pacific
apacinfo@f5.com

F5 Networks Ltd.
Europe/Middle-East/Africa
emeainfo@f5.com

F5 Networks
Japan K.K.
f5j-info@f5.com