

Free wireless Internet

KSA plans to bring wireless to major Kwantlen campus lounges by next year

By Jason Rako
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The Kwantlen Student Association plans to introduce wireless Internet in its lounges and cafes at all major campuses.

"We are hoping that the system will be up in Langley and Richmond in the new year," wrote Rob Myles, information systems specialist and facilities coordinator, in an e-mail addressed to the Chronicle.

Being the frontrunner of the KSA's plans to incorporate wireless internet at all campuses, the wireless network at the Fishbowl lounge at the Surrey campus is fully operational but is limited only to that part of the campus.

"This is a KSA-sponsored system so only the KSA areas provide wireless," wrote Myles.

While the network is free for students to use, there is a sign-up procedure that has to be done before using the KSA wireless network.

"Students can sign up for free on the start-up screen," wrote Myles. "Then come to our office at [room] G1240 and we will validate your account for a year at a time."

Room G1240 is located at the Surrey campus.

After signing up, users are prompted to a log-in screen.

"Any browser opened while using the wireless will go to a log-in screen which will allow signup and login," wrote Myles. "After 20 minutes of inactivity, you are logged off and must login again. You do not need to go to any address and your homepage is overridden for [the] login process only."

Myles states that there is one section of the login page that prompts a user for credit-card information but this is not necessary for the free

wireless service.

"The service is supplied by Fatport, who have other wireless locations around the Lower Mainland," wrote Myles. "Thus, you can buy into their system which allows surfing at any of those locations or you can sign up for free use of the wireless on any KSA server by signing up at G1240."

Students also have freedom of their choice of programs that they can use on the service but if certain programs do become problematic, the administrators of the wireless network have the power to block them.

Another restriction is the amount of data administrators are allowing the system to handle at this time.

"The traffic is currently being limited as to not affect our current network system," wrote Myles. "The system is plenty fast enough to search the net, however downloads of larger files is limited."

As for potential dangers with the wireless network, Myles says that there isn't much to fear.

"A wireless network isn't really any more dangerous than a wired network from the user's perspective. You still have to maintain your security, and common sense, such as having an active virus protection package," wrote Myles. "Communications are easier to intercept, although high-level encryptions are used to protect individual signals, so it is still important to be very careful with sensitive data."

Since the service is still in its infancy, Myles says that the logistics of the signup at other campuses haven't been determined at this point.

The KSA hopes to have signup available at all campuses where the service is in operation.

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-Rob Myles