Wireless Internet

Now available on the Folsom Lake College Campus!

Frequently Asked Questions about the FLC Wireless LAN Network

1. Can I access everything on the wireless connection that I can normally access with a wired public connection?

   The FLC_Hotspot wireless network provides access to the Internet and most web-based systems in the Los Rios network. Access to internal Los Rios network resources such as file servers and printers is not allowed on this network. This network requires user authentication and provides limited network security or privacy.

2. Where can I access the FLC wireless network?

   You can access the FLC wireless network from most locations on the FLC campus.

3. What wireless network cards are recommended and/or supported?

   For PCs and Macs, we recommend use of a network card that is 802.11b/g or /a WIFI compliant.

4. How many people can be on the wireless network at once?

   The wireless network can handle hundreds of users logged in at any one time, but the more active users, the slower the network becomes. On average, one access point can handle 25 web users without a noticeable degradation in performance. Many access points are installed at Folsom Lake College to provide radio coverage and service the expected user network demand.

5. I heard I should be getting 54 Mbps speeds; my speeds are slower than this. Is my card defective?

   54 Mbps (megabits per second) is the theoretical maximum speed for an 802.11g/a wireless network (11 Mbps for 802.11b). If the wireless signal is strong you could see a ‘connect speed’ of 54 Mbps, however the actual network performance will be something less than this due to the relative inefficiency of the wireless protocol and bandwidth sharing on the access point. Your wireless card will automatically adjust its speed to the access point, based on a few factors such as support for the 802.11g/a protocols and signal strength (distance from access point and interference). In general, you will typically see much better network performance on a wired network than on a wireless network.
6. Why is my wireless connection disrupted more frequently than my wired connection?

Wireless access points operate within either the 2.4GHz (802.11b/g) or 5.5Ghz (802.11a) unlicensed, frequency ranges and are prone to interference from microwave ovens, other unknown access points in the area, some cordless phones and many other environmental factors that may be passing between you and the access point at any given time. Though the wireless protocol was designed to be robust, it is still radio frequency and it can be interrupted by various pieces of equipment and/or structures.

7. Is there a charge to establish a wireless connection?

There is no charge for this service.

8. May I privately conduct financial or personal business over the wireless LAN?

The FLC_Hotspot wireless LAN has no privacy safeguards or security mechanisms in place and is therefore not an appropriate network for this type of activity. The installation of VPN client software could facilitate such privacy if your host server supported this connection. The installation and support of VPN client software is the User’s responsibility.

9. Should I install personal firewall software on my PC before participating on the wireless LAN?

Yes, it is a very good idea to install personal firewall software on a PC that is exposed to the Internet, along with up-to-date anti-virus and anti-spyware software and the installation of current Microsoft patches. Though both networks do reside behind the Los Rios firewall, so are afforded some protection from Internet exploits and worms, there is no anti-virus or protection provided.

10. Will campus staff help me set up wireless on my laptop or other devices?

The campus provides wireless access free of charge. It is the responsibility of the wireless user to setup wireless access and to provide anti-virus and anti-spyware software on their own equipment. The wireless user is also responsible for maintaining all security patches on the laptop or other wireless access device.

11. Is there anyone who can troubleshoot my connection problems?

Folsom Lake College faculty and staff will not help configure a student’s machine. Every computer is different, students will be responsible for knowing how to configure and operate their own equipment.

12. Do I have to be a student to use the FLC_Hotspot wireless connection?

Yes. You must have a valid student, staff or faculty Los Rios Community College District ID number to use this service.