

Internet access top priority for global travellers

Global research of 10,000 travellers from InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG) reveals that for 40% of travellers, lack of internet connection is the biggest stress, as logging on helps people feel at home in their hotel room and communicating with family is their top way to de-stress when away from home.

The global research was commissioned to mark the launch this month of the group's renamed loyalty programme, IHG Rewards Club. Lack of internet connection is now the biggest travel headache for people away on business, ahead of difficult transport links (26%) and noisy location (24%).

The research is helping the group understand hotel guests' priorities when travelling, as it becomes the first and only hotel group to offer free internet access globally to all its loyalty members. This new benefit started with Elite members at the beginning of July and will roll out to all members from 2014, whether they are staying the night at a hotel or coming in for a coffee or impromptu meeting.

Other internet stats

- 61% said that internet was the most important additional facility in their hotel room above TV (17%); bath (5%); fridge (3%) and mini bar (1%)
- Logging onto the internet in their room when they first arrive topped the list of things that help travellers feel most at home in their hotel room (31%), above exploring the room (25%), taking a hot shower (14%) or even unpacking (13%)
- 64% say that they would prefer to communicate with people back home over the internet rather than using the phone
- 53% of parents surveyed cited connecting with family at home as the best way to de-stress at the end of a working day
- 89% said that free internet would make them happier whilst travelling away for business
- 65% would be very unhappy travelling if they had no way of connecting with loved ones back home

Relationship expert, Jenni Trent Hughes explains, "Just hearing a voice on a telephone is no longer sufficient for the 21st century traveller, we need the comfort of being able to see loved ones too. We want to see our children's smiles when we're reading them their bedtime story over Skype; be able to look our partner in the eye when we tell them how much we miss them, as well as keep up with all our social media obligations and emails.

"We now believe that when staying away from home, being connected with a minimum fuss and maximum ease is crucial for keeping our various relationships ticking over. When these expectations aren't met, we feel anxious and frustrated so it's no wonder that nowadays many of us can't relax until we are safely checked-in and logged-on."

Richard Solomons, chief executive, IHG, adds, "We understand how important it is for our guests to be able to stay in touch whilst travelling. That is why, alongside existing benefits such as points that never expire, we have introduced free internet for our members as part of the Rewards Club. These leading benefits are why more travellers have chosen the Rewards Club than any other hotel loyalty programme worldwide.

"The group's family of brands across 4600 hotels ranges from an award-winning InterContinental resort to a city-centre Holiday Inn hotel. Our scale and diversity means that our hotels can meet our guests' needs whatever the occasion."

Research data

OnePoll carried out the IHG 'Rewarding Relationships' survey.

- All figures unless otherwise stated are from OnePoll
- 10000 adults were surveyed worldwide in Australia (1000), Canada (1000), China (1000), France (1000), Germany (1000), Indonesia (300), Malaysia (400), Mexico (1000), Russia (1000), Singapore (300), UK (1000) and US (1000)
- Fieldwork was undertaken between 21 May and 14 June 2013
- The survey was carried out online
- The figures for each country have been weighted and are representative of adults who travel for business (aged 18+) in each country

For more information, go to www.ihg.com/IHGRewardsClub.

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