

# FACT SHEET

## WiFi Hotspots.

WiFi has become an integral part of our daily lives. We would also like to have a fixed or wireless internet connection at locations other than our home or office. Important support tools for this are WiFi hotspots. These can be found in many places such as hotels, restaurants, camping sites, airports, trains, and so on. The convenience of a wireless internet connection is vast but many people do not realise that an unsecured WiFi network also involves the necessary risks. This factsheet identifies these risks and provides a number of recommendations to reduce the risks.

### Risks

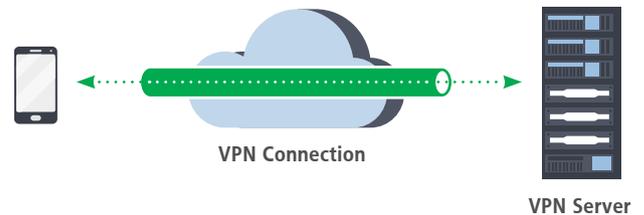
Many public WiFi hotspots can be easily and quickly logged into or do not need to be logged into at all. Every WiFi hotspot that you don't need to login to, is unprotected. Cybercriminals have many opportunities to steal data.

One of these possibilities is 'sniffing' WiFi. This is done using a laptop that has some extra features and matching software to intercept WiFi traffic. This traffic can then be stored on the laptop for a more detailed view of the data. If the cybercriminal is also connected to the same network, he or she may also be able to view the data on other connected mobile devices such as mobile phones, laptops and tablets. The cybercriminal may also choose to set up a false network in, for example, a public place the intention of connecting unsuspecting users to this network (WiFi phishing). Very often the name of this network resembles that of the network of public places. All internet traffic that is transmitted over this network can be monitored. Think of e-mail, bank transactions, personal data passwords, and so on.

### Recommendations

A number of measures can be taken to reduce the risks as much as possible when using public WiFi hotspots.

The safest way is to use a VPN (Virtual Private Network) connection. A VPN connection creates a tunnel between your laptop or mobile phone and a VPN server on the other side. The data traffic through this tunnel is fully encrypted and can no longer be read by cybercriminals. A VPN connection requires a subscription to a VPN provider.



Another possibility is to use your mobile phone as a hotspot. Most mobile phones offer this functionality. You can then connect to your mobile phone using your laptop or tablet. The internet connection is made to the service provider via 3G/4G. However, it is possible to monitor and decrypt data traffic via 3G/4G.





If you are using a public WiFi hotspot without a VPN connection, please keep the following points in mind:

- Make sure no one is looking over your shoulder when you login to your laptop, webmail or other accounts.
- Check the login screen to see if you have a secure connection (HTTPS).
- Never leave your laptop unattended.
- Do not let your laptop or mobile phone automatically connect to the nearest network.
- Turn off file sharing.
- Do not use online banking.
- Use e-mail only for informal messages.

### After all

The use of WiFi hotspots is certainly not without risks, but by taking sufficient precautions and acting with care, these risks can be limited as much as possible. The use of a WiFi hotspot in combination with a VPN connection is certainly recommended. As a result, internet traffic is protected and cyber-criminals can not read your data.

## Contact

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