

Introducing the Personal Telco Project

Hello from all the members of Personal Telco. First and foremost, please accept our thanks for taking time out of your day to read this. We appreciate your interest in PTP, and we hope that in time you will become as enthusiastic about our mission as we are.

The PTP Mission

To promote and build public wireless networks through community support and education. Personal Telco is a grass roots effort to build an Internet-connected wireless network in Portland, Oregon. By deploying our own wireless access points, and providing the tools and support for others to do so, we are fostering the global growth of city-wide networks which are open to, and maintained by the public.

The History of the Personal Telco Project

PTP was formed in August 2000 by a few friends interested in the budding wireless ethernet technologies and has since grown into one of the world's leading Wi-Fi community groups.

Our flagship node, overlooking Pioneer Courthouse Square serves Internet users everyday, and has been providing free Wi-Fi since March 2002, longer than the Starbucks/T-mobile in the Square. In fact, when Intel showcased Wi-Fi technology last summer, the PTP node had at least 3 times as many users as the free-for-a-day T-Mobile node in PCS. This highlights both the easy of use, and ubiquity of PTP nodes.

Who We Are

Personal Telco members are your neighbors, your customers and your friends. Our community is vast and all-inclusive. Our members range from computer experts who are proud to be called "geek," to business professionals who call IT everytime they need to print. We are teenagers and grandparents. Anyone interested in free wireless access for the public is welcome in PTP. This is something we are passionate about, and we are always eager to share that passion.

Four Facts About Portland's Personal Telco Project

Whether you've heard of us before, or this is the first you've seen the red tower logo, there are a few things everyone should know about PTP:

1. PTP is one of the foremost authorities on Wi-Fi in the Pacific NW.

Many of the Northwest's experienced Wi-Fi developers are members of the PTP discussion group, attend meetings and are official members. PTP is the only place to find their accumulated knowledge.

2. PTP is entirely non-profit; our work is a labor of love for technology and the community.

Wireless access is becoming commonplace, especially in metropolitan centers. Throughout its existence, PTP has set itself apart by deploying wireless nodes that are entirely free to any and all members of the community while being as reliable as—and often less encumbered than—competing for-profit nodes. While many of the talented individuals behind PTP are well respected, in-demand professionals working with Wi-Fi technology, they provide their skills and expertise to PTP free of charge and with as much enthusiasm as they bring to their day jobs.

3. Installing a PTP node can be a valuable asset to your business.

Personal Telco nodes are well known throughout the Portland Metro Area for being reliable and affordable means of accessing the Internet. Restaurants and cafes that join the PTP network should notice a new crop of regulars within the first months of installing a node. Professional offices that host public nodes, such as those covering the Pioneer Courthouse Square Area and the PGE Park Area can often benefit from high-profile publicity when their node opens. By operating a PTP node, you benefit from the goodwill associated with the PTP name.

4. Operating a node is very affordable.

Many businesses now have broadband Internet connections. These are often idle even during peak business hours. For a small, one-time investment in hardware (an access point, and a low-end PC to serve as a router for wireless traffic) you can turn otherwise unused bandwidth into an attractive service for your customers and the community. Even if you don't have broadband currently, the low-cost of DSL service could well be offset by profits that attracting customers with free Wi-Fi can bring. Best of all, when you install a PTP node, PTP's dedicated members can provide their skills in node installation and maintenance free of charge.

“It draws people in and keeps them here, It makes for a nice atmosphere.”

-Jen Procter, Manager at Tiny's on free wifi, quoted in The Portland Tribune

“We maintain a full working relationship with PTP. They continue to do a terrific job.”

-Rich Bader, cofounder of Easystreet, quoted in The Business Journal

“Though Portland certainly has its fair share of Starbucks coffee shops, with their subscription-based wireless Internet access, it's not actually the number of pay-for-access hot spots from T-Mobile and other providers that earned Portland its star status on the wireless map...Rather, it is Portland's own all-volunteer wireless-geek group, Personal Telco Project, that has given us our wireless cool.”

-Aliza Earnshaw from The Business Journal

“Jim Lacy uses Personal Telco to check his e-mail and surf the net, whenever he's away from his home connection. ‘This is incredible. It's fast, it's free -- in Pioneer Square. You can have coffee -- it's great. You just need to buy a standard Wi-Fi card. They range from 40 bucks to about 110,’ says Lacy of the ease of Wi-Fi.”

-Fox 12 Editorial



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