

Fast, free in-flight Wi-Fi is uncharted territory for airlines

By Mike Tierney, New York Times

As broadband Internet service becomes increasingly widespread and free in public places, it has remained, to travelers' frustration, stuck in the slow lane on airplanes.

But with recent developments in technology, sluggish in-flight Internet speed is starting, however fitfully, to change. Still, it might not catch up to passengers' expectations, as many are accustomed to a superior Internet experience on the ground.

"The thing that they must realize is that in-flight Wi-Fi is still a very new product, and the expectation that you'll get a good, strong signal like you do at home or office needs to be reined in," said Chris McGinnis, founder of TravelSkills, a blog that focuses on the business passenger, and an inveterate user of Wi-Fi while airborne. "Airlines are partially to blame for inflating expectations."

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