OpenRoaming Powered by Intel:

A Zero-Touch Connection for Laptops to OpenRoaming Wi-Fi Networks

Dr. Necati Canpolat

Medium.com Intel Tech

We have all been there. You are gearing up for your business trip to Chicago, and you're making one last mental check to make sure you have everything.

Keys? Check. Phone? Check. Boarding pass? Check.

Intel-powered laptop? Check.

You wince a little at the memory of your last trip, when you had to access Wi-Fi separately at the airport, the restaurant, and the hotel, but smile when you remember that you don't have to worry about that anymore. You can now rest assured that your laptop and mobile devices will automatically connect to over one million OpenRoaming access points without so much as a mouse click.

OpenRoaming, powered by Intel, is going to make sure your laptop stays securely connected throughout the duration of your trip. But what is OpenRoaming?

OpenRoaming

OpenRoaming is the Wireless Broadband Alliance's (WBA) Federated Roaming framework for Wi-Fi. OpenRoaming enables interconnecting Wi-Fi Access Network Providers (ANP) and ID providers (IDP) and creates a one-global-Wi-Fi-Network where mobile devices can connect seamlessly and securely worldwide.

OpenRoaming uses WPA2/3 Enterprise level security that provides encryption on the data packets. Also in use is WBA's OpenRoaming PKI framework to enable end-to-end security that eliminates honeypots, evil twins, and other security concerns. OpenRoaming ensures everything you do on a laptop is secure.

This is in sharp contrast to how things have traditionally been done. In the past, best practices dictated the use of Virtual Private Networks (VPNs) for business laptops to maintain security, even tough at a slower speed, when connecting to open Wi-Fi networks like those in airports, hotels, and coffee shops. Each new session, each new location, requires the VPN to be reset again.

OpenRoaming, however, means no more multiple logins, no more giving out your email, no more accepting multiple terms and conditions, no more security risks, and no more VPNs. Just use OpenRoaming and you can connect to OpenRoaming networks seamlessly and securely all around the world.

The WBA recently announced that they now have over 1 million OpenRoaming enabled access points with more becoming enabled each day. All these access points can already be seamlessly accessed by Google Pixel and Samsung smartphone owners.

For laptops, Intel initiated several efforts to enable OpenRoaming on Intel-based devices, like partnering with AT&T and Single Digits and opening a lab for testing OpenRoaming.

Intel and AT&T OpenRoaming Partnership

Intel and AT&T launched an effort in which an Intel-based PC—using an AT&T SIM card—can be provisioned with an OpenRoaming-ready profile with an AT&T identity. The PC can then connect seamlessly to OpenRoaming Wi-Fi networks, both indoors and outdoors. An AT&T OpenRoaming PC can also connect to AT&T hotspots and AT&T mobile networks. All this enables a more continuous connectivity experience for users on the go.

Intel and Single Digits OpenRoaming Partnership

In conjunction with AT&T, Intel and Single Digits announced a concept to rapidly broaden the OpenRoaming adoption for PCs. Before even leaving for the trip, an

Intel-based PC can be provisioned for OpenRoaming through an online portal hosted by Single Digits. An Intel PC with an OpenRoaming profile from Single Digits can then connect seamlessly to available OpenRoaming Wi-Fi networks on the go. This portal is open to the public on certain types of devices. (You can give it a try too! From your PC, access this URL, follow the on-screen instructions and install the profile. You are good to go!)

Intel OpenRoaming Test Facility

In addition, Intel announced the deployment of an OpenRoaming trial network at its Casper test facility in Oregon! Cisco helped bring up this trial network. This trial network is incremental to adding to the millions of OpenRoaming hotspots. Intel is using this trial network to further test OpenRoaming for PCs and engage with more WBA partners.

Expanding and Growing- OpenRoaming's Future

All OpenRoaming requires is an Intel-powered, SIM-enabled laptop with an AT&T SIM card. Or, your Intel-powered laptop can have a Single Digits OpenRoaming profile. Now you have access to every single OpenRoaming access point worldwide.

Intel, AT&T, Single Digits and Cisco plan to continue these efforts to test the functionality and expand OpenRoaming through the end of the year and share the progress along the way.

To read more about OpenRoaming, check out Intel's OpenRoaming blog or whitepaper released last October.

Please reach out to us for more details.

Notices & Disclaimers

Intel technologies may require enabled hardware, software or service activation.

No product or component can be absolutely secure.