

## Market Backgrounder of Wireless LAN for Public Access

**W**LAN (Wireless Local Area Network), like the Internet technology that precedes it, had its technology available silently for quite a while since early 90's. It isn't until IEEE standardized the protocol 802.11 that WLAN goes hot. Users clearly see the benefit of this new technology for its sufficient bandwidth (unlike GPRS or even 3G) and lower cost while being able to utilize existing applications without the need to rewrite them.

Analysts estimate that Wi-Fi is already in use in about 40 million homes, offices and public access area. According to In-Stat MDR, for year-end 2002, WLAN recorded a 90% growth over 2001. Wireless 'hotspot' (the term hotspot stands for a physical location where bandwidth is shared wirelessly using 802.11 technology) is in fact getting a lot of market attention. WLAN is clearly a disruptive technology, in a sense that it creates a new model of communication. By utilizing existing technology (i.e. PC, PDA) and extending it in an economical way, existing applications are preserved. Rather than investing in a new incompatible hardware (e.g. 3G handset), WLAN gives users tremendous benefit without big investment. Some critics even argue that WLAN has the potential to kill off problematic 3G. While this viewpoint is not universally agreed, one thing that everyone seems to agree is that WLAN is readily available today.

PatronSoft's FirstSpot™, a WLAN Access Server, arises out of the need to secure and track connection when setting up public WLAN (Wireless Local Area Network) hotspots or visitor-based networks. FirstSpot provides crucial services such user login and location-based (or local) content presentation in the WLAN infrastructure (Fig. 1). Our unique design enables us to solve the above problem in an efficient, scalable and flexible manner. In terms of configuration and management, it's like a breeze in FirstSpot, thanks to our neatly designed web-based Configuration Manager (Fig. 2).

One of the key differentiations for FirstSpot™ is that it is available on the Windows platform. By utilizing standard PC OS, FirstSpot™ helps operators or Hotspot owners to secure and track their network without resorting to proprietary hardware or difficult-to-setup Linux solution. FirstSpot™ can help operators to break a major barrier in setting up Hotspot and has the potential to help widespread adaptation of this new WLAN technology.

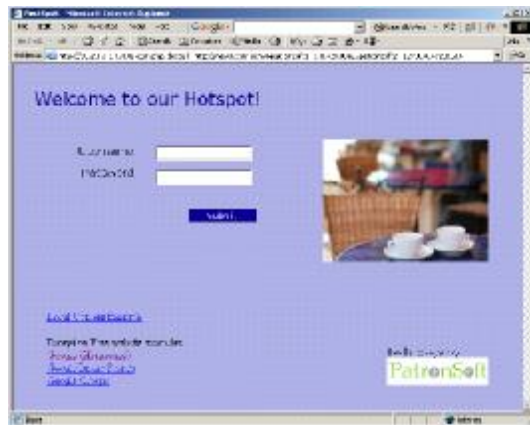


Fig. 1 Users are forced to authenticate with FirstSpot server the first time he tries to access the Internet

Fig. 2 All FirstSpot settings can be configured through the web-based Configuration Manager

