

## More than half of world's urban population has no broadband access

- *57% of world's population are urban unconnected, with 37% of these people living in some of the world's wealthiest cities*
- *World Wi-Fi Day to focus government and industry minds on connecting the unconnected across developed and emerging economies*

**Singapore, 20 June 2016** - An independent research study commissioned by the Wireless Broadband Alliance, to mark today's inaugural [World Wi-Fi Day](#), reveals the extent of the digital divide that exists globally - most notably in some of the world's largest cities. The study reveals the majority (57%) of the global urban population remains unconnected, with more than a third (37%) living in some of the world's wealthiest cities. The report, undertaken by Maravedis Rethink Research, aims to identify the amount of unconnected citizens living in urban areas across the globe, in both developed and emerging economies.

The global report has found the number of urban unconnected is highest in the Middle East and Asia Pacific regions. Yet connectivity still remains a key issue in Europe and North America. The lack of urban connectivity can be attributed to a number technological and political challenges, from low levels of income to the high cost of fixed and mobile services.

Key regional insights taken from the research include:

- Europe has the lowest percentage of urban unconnected at 17%, the Middle East and Africa has the highest proportion of urban unconnected citizens at 82%
- London is the most connected major global city (only 8% unconnected), while Lagos is the least connected city (88.3%)
- Almost a quarter (23%) of people in North America have no broadband connection despite having the world's highest average monthly income. In Los Angeles, 24.9% of citizens lack a broadband connection
- Just over two thirds (68%) of people in Asia Pacific have no broadband connection, while 55% of people in Latin America are without broadband
- Levels of income are closely linked to broadband adoption rates, but also other aspects play a role such as age, access to computers and computer literacy.

The Wireless Broadband Alliance has launched World Wi-Fi Day to promote the benefits of Wi-Fi and champion the exciting solutions being offered to the public to help bridge the digital divide. In support of World Wi-Fi Day, over 80 organizations will be running a number of initiatives offering free Wi-Fi access to people across the world, including:

AlwaysOn (South Africa), BT (UK), Cosmote (Greece), CSL (Hong Kong), Fon (several countries), docomo (Japan), KPN (the Netherlands), Proximus (Belgium), Romania Telekom and Telstra (Australia).

A City Wi-Fi Roaming initiative will also be launched in honor of World Wi-Fi Day. This will allow consumers to automatically roam, throughout July and August, between public Wi-Fi networks of major cities including New York, San Francisco, San Jose and Singapore.



“There is a clear divide between the digital haves and the digital have-nots. And while this divide generally mirrors socioeconomic trends around the world, there are surprisingly high levels of urban unconnected citizens in major cities,” said Shrikant Shenwai, CEO of the Wireless Broadband Alliance. “World Wi-Fi Day is an opportunity to recognize the contributions being made to help connect the unconnected around the globe, whether they be in major cities or rural communities. We are therefore calling on cities, governments, operators and technology companies, including Facebook, Google and Microsoft, to come together today to help deliver affordable, sustainable connectivity for everyone, everywhere.”

World Wi-Fi Day is being backed by the Connected City Advisory Board (CCAB), to help deliver the vision of Connected Cities around the world. With senior representatives from Barcelona, Dublin, Mexico City, New York City, San Francisco, San Jose and Singapore, as well as the governments of Delhi and Philippines involved, the CCAB helps and aids the development and execution of Connected City Plans.

“Affordable and sustainable broadband connectivity within cities is an absolute must. Not only is it helping citizens today, but connectivity will be the key to transforming and improving the development of cities around the world in years to come,” said Reza Jafari, Chairman and CEO of the CCAB. “In order to make Connected Cities a reality, we need the industry to come together and realize this vision. This is why we are backing World Wi-Fi Day, to help celebrate the work that has taken place, but also to stress the need to continue to broaden the availability of Wi-Fi access.”

World Wi-Fi Day will be the foundation for driving and promoting connectivity worldwide. The Wireless Broadband Alliance urges and invites you to participate in World Wi-Fi Day. If you would like to get involved, or support and fund projects to connect the unconnected, please email [contactus@wballiance.com](mailto:contactus@wballiance.com).

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### **About the Wireless Broadband Alliance**

Founded in 2003, the mission of the Wireless Broadband Alliance (WBA) is to champion the development of the converged wireless broadband ecosystem through seamless, secure and interoperable unlicensed wireless broadband services for delivering outstanding user experience. Building on our heritage of NGH and carrier Wi-Fi, WBA will continue to drive and support the adoption of Next Gen Wi-Fi and other unlicensed wireless services across the entire public Wi-Fi ecosystem, including IoT, Big Data, Converged Services, Smart Cities, 5G, etc. Today, membership includes major fixed operators such as BT, Comcast and Time Warner Cable; seven of the top 10 mobile operator groups (by revenue) and leading technology companies such as Cisco, Microsoft, Huawei Technologies, Google and Intel. WBA member operators collectively serve more than 2 billion subscribers and operate more than 25 million hotspots globally.

The WBA Board includes AT&T, Boingo Wireless, BT, China Telecom, Cisco Systems, Comcast, Intel, KT Corporation, Liberty Global, NTT DOCOMO, Orange and Ruckus Wireless. For a complete list of current WBA members, please [click here](#).

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## Research Methodology

The methodology for estimating the proportion of urban unconnected citizens took data about population from the same surveys about Internet use or from national censuses or official population estimates conducted by the governments of the countries where the cities are located. In order to maintain consistency and comparability, the year of reference considered in all cases was not earlier than 2014. When the last year available was earlier than 2014, available data about the population growth rate and the Internet use growth rate was used to estimate the figure for 2015.

In regards to the urban feature, this was defined according to each of the governmental criteria of how the respective metropolitan area is composed. This refers to the municipalities, counties, or prefectures that belong to each metro Area. Therefore, their respective populations were considered to estimate the urban unconnected in each city.

Finally, the data about the primary reasons for not having access to broadband was obtained through surveys, censuses, and official statistics compiled by the respective national governments. The average income was either obtained from statistics reported by city governments or estimated based on the average wage reported by the official statistics of each national government.