



INVERNESS PILOTS ENHANCED FREE WiFi TO BOOST LOCAL BUSINESSES

Rapier Systems delivers State of the Art Technology and Data Analytics to support Business and Tourism in Highland Capital



Visitors and local businesses have welcomed the launch of Ness WiFi, which delivers fast, free Internet access across Inverness city centre.

The pilot project is funded by the Inverness and Highland City - Region Deal and led by The Highland Council, in partnership with Rapier Systems, the country's leading wireless communications company.

Rapier supplied and installed the hardware for the open network and added advanced 'Social WiFi' software, which automatically gathers publicly available information from users logging in via their Social Media accounts, greatly enhancing the ability to interact with visitors. The system is also designed to allow targeted promotions from local businesses and can help to promote events and tourist attractions. More than two thirds of all users log on via Facebook.

Rapier recently designed and installed WiFi in the city's famous Eden Court theatre, and has engineered a high - speed wireless link from Aviemore to the top of Cairngorm Mountain, a distance of around 7 miles, adding WiFi hotspots on the mountain at various Ski-Lift locations.

The Ness WiFi network is free for all users and has no time restriction; the first phase covers an area including the Victorian Market, Falcon Square, Queensgate, Union Street and part of Church Street. The pilot will help shape the main city WiFi rollout by providing city centre visitor demographic data.

Ness WiFi was previewed in December 2016 by Lord Andrew Dunlop, UK Government - which helped to deliver the City - Region Deal, with excellent feedback to date. The full city centre roll out will follow in summer this year.

Provost of Inverness, Helen Carmichael said: "I am delighted to see this exciting project get underway. The benefit of easy access to free, fast Internet connection will be enormous for shoppers, tourists and businesses in the city centre. So much of what we do depends on the Internet, whether you are looking for directions, checking emails, searching for accommodation, booking a restaurant or show, or chatting with friends or colleagues.

"The vision behind the City - Region Deal is to position the city and the Highlands as a region of digital opportunity. Inverness will be one of the few cities across the UK with free WiFi and a project like this will truly help us towards the ambition of making Highland a place of digital opportunities."

Richard Watson, Rapier's MD, added: "We are delighted to be involved in this pilot, which demonstrates the commitment of The Highland Council to embracing the digital economy; our track record in long - range wireless communications projects across the Highlands is perfectly complemented by Ness WiFi, which highlights our expertise in town and city WiFi provision."

Mike Smith, Manager of Inverness Business Improvement District (BID) welcomed the initiative. He said: "On behalf of the local businesses, we welcome the launch of the WiFi project which will add even greater value to the city centre offer for visitors and residents alike."

More information about Ness WiFi can be found at www.nesswifi.co.uk

Rapier is delivering WiFi solutions in other major Scottish Towns and Cities and is in discussion with several more; the company is a member of the Scotland's Towns Partnership - an organisation set up to help reinvigorate and rejuvenate Scotland's Towns and Cities.

About Rapier Systems

Formed in 2003 Rapier has always focused exclusively on wireless. The company has unrivalled expertise in the design, delivery and support of wireless (including WiFi) networks and systems, and is a value - added integrator of best - in - class wireless products.

Whatever the wireless need Rapier can help; within or between buildings or other networked systems, upgrading or replacing existing networks, or designing and installing new wireless systems, Rapier has unparalleled experience in environmental analysis, design, product selection and installation.

Rapier recently introduced rapierconnect, a 'Social WiFi' product that allows retailers to collect and exploit customers' data from their publicly available Social Media accounts. In addition, the company has just become Siklu's only Premier Partner in Scotland, extending its wireless range to include very high capacity (2Gb) products.

Rapier works with world leading wireless system vendors, including Ruckus, Alvarion, Mojo, Cambium/Motorola, Siklu, Ceragon, Fastback, SAF Technika, Bridgewave, RepeatIT, Xirrus and more. The company has reached the highest level of accreditation with each of its partners and understands which vendor and product is best suited for each environment.

Rapier has a UK wide customer base in sectors that include Local Government; Transport, Renewables, Oil and Gas, Retail chains, individual shops and hotels.

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