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Internet: Cubans Navigate with Wi-Fi

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With the goal of widening access to Internet users, the Cuban Telecommunications Company (Etecsa) opened today 35 Internet rooms with Wi-Fi technology in public spaces of several cities, besides lowering the rate for that purpose.

The chosen Wi-Fi spots in the Cuban capital were La Rampa, from Malecon Avenue to Yara movies; the parks on 51 Ave., in La Lisa, and Fe del Valle, in Galiano and San Rafael streets, Centro Habana; the Amphitheater of Marianao and the Promenade in the Pan-American Villa, in Cojimar, East of Havana.

A quick tour through ETECSA facilities allowed us to see the long lines of interested people in signing contracts for local Nauta accounts. Signing this contract and using cell phones, laptops or tablets will allow them to hook up to Internet and communicate with different parts of the world.

Many were motivated to take these new services since the announcement that, starting this Wednesday, the price on the hour for Internet navigation would have a discount of up to 2 CUC (Cuban money equivalent to the dollar) for Nauta users, an approximate cut back of the 50% regarding the established rates.

As informed, the connection speed for wireless Internet will be 1 Mbps for each user, on this regard several interviewees said that although it's quick "when there are more than 100 people connected in a single spot, the servers get overloaded".

Besides showing concern for this clogging, the Wi-Fi spot in La Rampa, young Carlos Manuel Castillo García commented to AIN how positive were these steps for the computerization of society, "rates are yet far away from the affordability of many Cubans whose wages aren't enough".