

Increasing demand for hotel business centers - By Sergio Laurant

2007-07-17

A study done by the Travel Industry Association and Synovate last year, revealed that less than 25% of US leisure travelers carry a laptop with them when vacationing. This means that over 75% of travelers are traveling without their portable computers. And although sales of laptops to consumers has increased considerably, this relatively low number of leisure travelers carrying a laptop is not expected to increase much in the short term.

One reason many travelers are leaving their laptops behind at home is due to the more rigorous and often very rough anti-terrorist airport controls at virtually all international airports. Another factor that discourages vacationers to travel with their laptops is the substantial increase of theft of laptop computers in recent years. According to Safeware Insurance, the largest provider of insurance for laptops in the US, over 600,000 laptop thefts occurred in 2004, totaling an estimated \$720 million in hardware losses and \$5.4 billion in theft of proprietary information. So the best next alternative that technology-minded travelers have to stay connected away from home is through hotel business center computers connected to the Internet.

This is why many hotels are experiencing an increased demand for hotel business center services and are adopting a business center as a standard amenity. Many of these hotels have realized that a considerable number of reservations coming in from both business and leisure travelers, estimated to be roughly 20%, are made or cancelled dependent on the availability of quality business center computer services at their hotels. A good example is the Hilton hotels that promote themselves as 'America's Business Address'. Back in 2005 Hilton issued a property-wide memo instructing all their international hotels to adopt an onsite business center as part of the standard amenities offered by their properties. And many other hotel chains and independent hotels are following suit.

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This article comes from Hotel News Resource

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