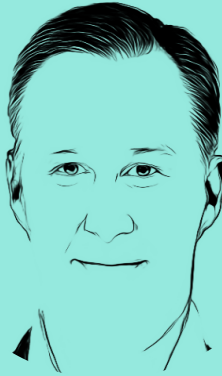# The Fast-Forward Tech Stack for 2024

The Hotel Yearbook Technology 2024

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5 Reasons Passpoint (Hotspot 2.0) is an Essential Piece of the Hospitality Tech Stack

Tech Stack

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Synopsis
This article highlights the new WiFi Certified Passpoint® protocol that was introduced as a solution that offers automatic authentication at every access point, delivering a seamless and convenient digital experience for guests. The article explains Passpoint benefits for both hoteliers and guests, including efficiency, convenience, security, and engagement. Passpoint®is recognized as a proven technology used in various travel applications and can be integrated into the hospitality industry to enhance connectivity, drive brand loyalty, and differentiate hotels in a competitive landscape.

The moment your plane hits the runway and you turn off Airplane Mode, you're immediately connected to a cellular signal. Similarly, when you walk in the door at home, your device instantly connects to your home Wi-Fi network. In either case, there's no log-in or re-authentication required. Your device remembers, and it's a seamless, hassle-free process that we all take for granted.

Yet when it comes to hospitality Wi-Fi, it's a million little islands. Every connection requires re-authentication (sometimes every 24 hours) that creates friction for the guest, not to mention the disappointment that they're not remembered as a valued customer. Plus, there's the persistent risk of cybersecurity threats—bad actors can easily broadcast fake SSID names, baiting guests into accidentally connecting to an insecure network.

FROM "BASIC" SERVICE TO COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

It's been well-established that fast, reliable Wi-Fi service is as essential as hot water for today's modern traveler. But it actually goes much deeper than that—guests not only demand a connection, but they also expect a seamless, convenient, secure and personalized digital experience at every brand touchpoint. As a matter of fact, the network is in many cases the first touchpoint between a guest and the brand.

The WiFi Certified Passpoint® protocol from the Wi-Fi Alliance delivers that seamless experience through automatic authentication at every access point, and it's already been adopted in many other travel applications like planes, trains, coffee shops and more. But beyond just sheer convenience, Passpoint (originally known as Hotspot 2.0) offers a number of benefits for both hoteliers and guests that make it an essential part of the future-ready hospitality tech stack, as well as a competitive differentiator for brands.

Better User Journey
Passpoint improves the guest experience by making connection more efficient. After completing the initial authentication process, their device will automatically connect to the network on every subsequent visit, eliminating the need to find, choose and log-in to the network each time. It also eliminates calls to the front desk for help connecting to the Wi-Fi, which frees up precious staff time.

Users simply download the Passpoint profile and are connected. There is no need for confusing SSID searches, starting at a landing page and remembering the username and password. After the initial authentication, it works just like connecting to your Wi-Fi at home.

Guest Engagement
Because of its automatic authentication, Passpoint is often the first touchpoint guests have with the property, and it can be integrated with a branded app if available, providing an opportunity for hoteliers to offer better services to their loyal guests. That means hoteliers can engage with guests at various steps in the guest journey because they know who and where a person is connecting, starting with automated check-in greetings as soon as they walk through the door.

From there, property managers can connect guest user data to personalization and preference data to deliver helpful suggestions and opportunities to guests. For example, if it's clear from a guest's connection patterns that they're frequent patrons at the bar, the hotelier can send notifications about Happy Hour specials. Or if they connect near the on-site buffet every morning, the hotelier can send the menu each morning. Passpoint is the solution to connect networks with PMS and CRM guest profiles.

Roaming and Partnerships
The convenience of automatic authentication through Passpoint extends throughout the property and across any location within the brand with seamless connectivity at every access point. As guests move from their room to the lobby, the pool, conference center or fitness center, they remain connected with automatic handoff between hotspots. This feature is even more valuable in locations with on-site or adjacent conference center facilities, allowing guests to move between the hotel and the event space with continuous connectivity.

This is not only convenient for the guest, but also provides valuable user data to the hotelier. By tracking where guests connect to the Wi-Fi, brands can understand their behavior and tailor services and amenities to their needs. For example, hotel brands could partner with other travel companies to offer Passpoint Wi-Fi in other locations, such as keeping guests connected at an airport lounge.

Data Security
Unfortunately, scammers are a fact of the modern digital life, and hotels are no exception with thieves using all manner of trickery to lure guests into their schemes. Aside from the reputation damage, due to recent Federal Trade Commission orders, CEOs and CTOs could be held personally responsible for shortfalls in cybersecurity, so hoteliers now have an urgent mandate to ensure secure computing for their guests.

Passpoint provides a much more secure user environment compared to conventional Wi-Fi, alleviating security concerns with enhanced, built-in WPA3™ protocols. And because it offers automatic connection and authentication, guests avoid the risk of being duped by fake SSIDs that could siphon off their personal information.

Revenue generation
It's well-known that, across every industry, repeat customers are more likely to buy and spend more compared to new customers. And even a modest increase in customer retention by just 5% can drive at least 25% increase in profitability.

Passpoint's guest engagement opportunities allow hoteliers to capitalize on repeat business to drive additional revenue through upsell and cross-sell deals. Because these can be personalized for each guest, it enhances the guest experience by giving these offers an exclusive feel. Properties can promote spa services with a discounted or complimentary service or up-sell food and beverage service with a digital free appetizer coupon if user data shows they're frequent patrons of these amenities.

A MODERN SOLUTION READY FOR FULL-SCALE DEPLOYMENT

Passpoint provides clear advantages for both hospitality guests and hoteliers with greater efficiency, convenience, security and engagement that drives new revenue. It's also a proven technology that's already being used by hotels, retail, stadiums, and transport applications including rail/metro, airlines, airports, and maritime vessels, seamlessly handling billions of guest connections annually.

With purpose-built solutions designed specifically for the hospitality industry, Passpoint providers are capable of handling deployments across any size property and offer brand-app integration. As guests demand more—and more reliable—connectivity, Passpoint's established standard makes it a vital part of the new hospitality tech stack for keeping guests connected and driving brand affinity and loyalty.

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Hauke Lenthe is the Managing Director, Europe, Middle East, Africa and Asia Pacific at Nomadix, Inc., which provides secure networking and connectivity solutions purpose-built for hospitality. He has more than 25 years of hospitality and international hotel technology experience, spanning from managed internet services to operational PMS and guest-facing software.

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Nomadix brings connected experiences to life. For over 25 years, Nomadix has been a trusted vendor to the world's largest brands, delivering powerful and personalized connectivity and digital engagement solutions designed with real people in mind. Providing the backbone of visitor-based networks and managed Wi-Fi to properties and venues of any size in over 150 countries, Nomadix enables companies to connect, manage and engage in ways that redefine their digital customer experiences, help them make better business decisions and increase customer lifetime value.