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TRAVEL ADVISORY; Internet Service That Goes Anywhere

By **TONI L. KAMINS**

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While WiFi may be the Internet connection of choice for travelers, it is not always available. There are times when wired broadband or even old-fashioned dial-up may be the only options. In addition, your home or office Internet service provider may not be accessible on the road, even within the United States (or without incurring long-distance charges), and subscribing to an Internet service provider, or I.S.P., for a travel destination can be cumbersome and require more contractual commitment than you need. This problem is all the greater if you're traveling to more than one country in the course of a trip.

One of the latest solutions is a roaming I.S.P., which offers multiple connection options -- standard dial-up, WiFi and wired broadband -- through a single service and interface. Roaming I.S.P.'s provide access numbers in cities and states throughout the United States and in dozens of countries.

One player in this field, Ipass.com, links you to its various resellers; MaGlobe.net sells directly to individuals. A user sets up an account with a credit card and downloads the dialer software and pays only for the time used at rates are posted on the providers' Web sites.

The services work well, but they are not free of problems. For example, as a customer of Ipass.com, I have found that some dial-up numbers outside the United States that are labeled toll-free are in fact not. This can mean a nasty surprise when you get your hotel bill and find hefty surcharges added to calls that you thought had a toll-free dialing prefix.

Customer service can be less than cooperative in helping you to resolve problems like this, I have found, and may disavow knowledge of anything beyond what the local provider tells them.
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