



by Tom Finan, Editor | November 13, 2006

## Wi-Fi Comes in All Sizes

by Joan Wilder

On recent trips to Berlin, Germany and New York City, both my hotels lost money on me because they didn't offer free wireless Internet. Rather than paying \$10 a day for access at the New York hotel – and about \$12 per day at the one in Berlin -- I went around the block to cafes that had free access for the price of a cup of coffee. Inevitably, I'd buy more than coffee. In Berlin, over the course of a week, I spent a good \$30 or so a day at the Internet café which I'd never have found if the hotel was wired.

If free wireless is out for you, offering free Internet access at one or more hotel computers is immensely appreciated by many guests. Rather than having to go to the business office and sign in and pay for minutes online, integrating internet-ready computers into your resort's public places can add enormously to a guest's enjoyment --- and peace of mind.

No matter your décor – there are inconspicuous ways to add computer stations throughout your property. Bovey Castle -- a renovated manor house near Exeter, England, built by Peter de Savary, has a terminal in a beautiful wood and glass closet-like space about the size of an old phone booth.

How far can you go with Wi-Fi? How about your entire resort? Miami's Dolphins Stadium has become one of the first entertainment outlets to install a wireless network that blankets its entire 300,000 square foot arena, dining areas, parking lots, and executive suites with Internet access, reports the Miami Herald.

Ironically, although security prohibits fans from bringing laptops into the stadium (and who would want to?), that doesn't mean sports fans won't get to play around with the new technology. The stadium IT team and **BelAir Networks** reps are finalizing plans to install handheld devices attached to each seat so

fans can order victuals without moving their derrieres.

The stadium is also either using -- or gearing up to use -- the wireless network, launched in April, for enhanced security, venue-wide communications and sales, and a range of other entertainment-based applications.

## Erasing Another Kind of Footprint?

by Joan Wilder

Since celebrities like Leonardo DiCaprio and Brad Pitt have made headlines for their attempts to erase the effects of the greenhouse gases they generate by driving, flying, and buying, the trend to go "carbon neutral" is taking off.

Now, travelers booking vacations through Travelocity can "Go Zero" by offsetting all or part of the CO2 their trips generate -- by having trees planted. The first online travel company to partner with the Conservation Fund's Go Zero initiative, Travelocity is offering users a simple way to contribute to the fund's tree planting initiative at the same time they book their vacation. With a few clicks of the mouse (and twinges of the pocketbook), users can learn how many \$5 trees will "zero out" trips of various lengths. Travelocity also has a link to the Go Zero website, (<http://www.conservationfund.org/?article=3128>) where you can learn that

**Conference Center  
Market Strong:  
Institutional  
Influence Felt**

by David Arnold

Conference centers in the United States enjoyed a year of tremendous growth in revenues and profits in 2005. For the year, total revenue for these specialized lodging facilities increased 13.7 percent, while profits grew 39.2 percent. A healthy economy, combined with disciplined management, contributed to the strong performance of this segment. These observations come from an analysis of data collected in connection with the 2006 edition of Trends in the Conference Center Industry, published by **PKF Consulting (PKF-C)** in conjunction with the International Association of Conference Centers (IACC).

One element of the industry's success in recent years has been the increase in institutional ownership of conference center facilities. Conference centers have been increasingly viewed as stable, relatively high revenue-per-guest yielding assets with potential upside given professional management.

While the increase in institutional ownership can be viewed as a