TRAI wifi consultation note: comments from Wifi Dabba

www.wifidabba.com
karam@wifidabba.com
Bangalore

This paper demonstrates an indigenous, scalable, low cost wifi network that lives in the heart of Indian commerce.

It is pragmatic, transparent and forward looking. It values simplicity and scalablity above all else.

Wifi Dabba satisfys concerns voiced by commenters from the previous consultation paper

- ✓ Revenue for all stakeholders
- ✓ KYC norms are respected
- ✓ Secure & accountable model
- ✓ Existing infrastructure used
- ✓ Strong privacy & convenience

A scalable, low-cost stakeholder friendly implementation

₹2
100MB
24 Hrs Validity

Token Number
86734406
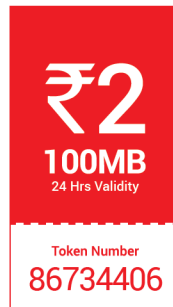
Wifi Dabbas are hotspots installed at micro-businesses like bakeries, tea-stalls and recharge shops. Customers buy paper tokens from the store for satchet size wifi access.

Token	Data	Validity
Rs. 2	100mb	24hrs
Rs. 10	500mb	24hrs
Rs. 20	1gb	24hrs

Customers connect to the network and simply enter their phone number and token to access the service. It takes two taps, no apps and less than 10 seconds to get wifi access.

ISP & Telecom stakeholder benefits

Wifi Dabba uses local broadband providers and pays retail prices for installation & bandwidth.

KYC & Security stakeholder benefits

Wifi Dabba collects KYC documents, rental agreements and photos from each micro-business. Each business is accountable for their connection.

Revenue & Payments stakeholder benefits

Tokens are priced at impressively reasonably and all wallet systems can be used to purchase tokens digitally Revenue is shared between Wifi Dabba and the micro-business.

Future proofing & Value additions

This new found connectivity allows the micro-business to accept digital payments and provides a platform for a host of other services to be provided by third-parties.

Spectrum/Licensing stakeholder benefits

The signal of Wifi Dabba is limited to around 30ft of the micro-business and therefore uses the existing spectrum already allocated towards wifi.

Privacy & Convenience stakeholder benefits

A phone number is required for validation. The user is paying for the wifi and therefore the company does not have to resort to ad-supported or other surveillance based models.

Findings from real world usage
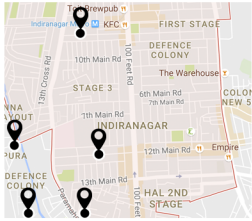
Usage Pattern
5 Wifi Dabbas across Indiranagar
5 weeks of continuous operation
60% new users Vs. 40% return user
10% users first time wifi users

Token	Share
Rs. 2	60%
Rs. 10	20%
Rs. 20	20%

Revenue & Purchasing behaviour
1000's of users have bought tokens
Most users have sub 5k smartphones
Significant revenue generation for
the micro-business.

Consumer & Store feedback

This is Venkatesh. He is the owner and operator of Sai Bakery, a small bakery store that is a hotspot provider using Wifi Dabba. He has an inventory of 84 items, the top selling of which are Tea, Cigarettes, Paan masala and biscuits. He averages 10 wifi users a day and claims an overall growth rate of footfalls of 10% in the last 5 weeks.

Our surveys with consumers at this location show that the primary uses are for wifi are chat and video with the remainder being split among search and games. Consumers consist of school children, salesmen, daily wage workers, auto rickshaw drivers and much more. TRAI sees digital literacy as one of the impediments to the expansion of the digital ecosystem. Wifi Dabba has successfully been able to address this issue at the grass-roots level while providing an additional source of revenue for the business.

Issues for consultation

Is the architecture suggested in the consultation note for creating unified authentication and payment infrastructure will enable nationwide standard for authentication and payment interoperability?

The idea of inter-operability is essential, however the model proposed has too many moving parts.
A centralized registry of any sort is bound to create issues at scale and lead to unforseen negative consequences.

Can Public Wi-Fi access providers resell capacity and bandwidth to retail users? Is "light touch regulation" using methods such as "registration" instead of "licensing" preferred for them?

Wifi access providers must be able to resell capacity and bandwidth. A monopoly cannot be granted via regulation to a select few providers.

Whether reselling of bandwidth should be allowed to venue owners s uch as shop keepers through Wi-Fi at premise? In such a scenario please suggest the mechanism for security compliance

Yes. Wifi Dabba is an excellent working model that demonstrates the reselling model.

Would you like to suggest any alternate model?

All models being proposed by all stakeholders are theoretical at the moment. Give time to test and implement these models in the real world. Give the industry time to figure out a good model. It's too early to setup guidelines for this. There is no clear winner for wifi providers as yet. TRAI should make sure there is a level playing field and approach all other issues with a 'light touch' for the forseeable future.

What should be the regulatory guidelines on "unbundling" Wi-Fi at access and backhaul level?

TRAI should adopt a light touch approach here as well. Give the industry time to innovate and develop workable models.

What should be the guidelines regarding sharing of costs and revenue across all entities in the public Wi-Fi value chain? Is regulatory intervention required or it should be left to forbearance and individual contracting?

No regulatory invention, let the market test pricing and implementation models before any guidelines are set.