Facebook’s Express Wi-Fi now has its own Android app

Facebook now has an app that lets people in developing countries pay for Wi-Fi. The company has launched an Express Wi-Fi app in Google Play to go along with its distributed Wi-Fi network. It currently only works in Indonesia and Kenya.

The app provides users a way to buy data packs and find nearby hotspots more easily, as first spotted by *TechCrunch*. Previously, to access Express Wi-Fi, users would either have to open a mobile web browser or download an app from a local telecom company, which would ask them to reconfigure their phone settings. Neither method gave users a way to figure out where the hotspots were located.

While the app is only available in two countries for now, Express Wi-Fi as a local service is already live in five countries: India, Kenya, Tanzania, Nigeria, and Indonesia. It relies on local business owners operating Wi-Fi hotspots that people nearby can pay to access higher-speed bandwidth using local ISPs, compared to typically slower mobile connections.

“Facebook is releasing the Express Wi-Fi app in the Google Play store to give people another simple and secure way to access fast, affordable internet through their local Express Wi-Fi hotspots,” the company said in a statement to *TechCrunch*.

Express Wi-Fi has been another attempt from Facebook to bring internet to underserved regions in developing countries, an effort that’s partly fueled by the tech company’s need to grow beyond an already saturated market among developed countries. Facebook has also launched Free Basics alongside Express Wi-Fi

in the past. Free Basics has been criticized for being filled with ads and possibly violating net neutrality, although it was free. Express Wi-Fi is arguably better since it at least offers a full version of the web, for a price.

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