



Lakehead University says no to WiFi

Dr. Fred Gilbert, President and Vice-Chancellor, Lakehead University

Photo from http://agora.lakeheadu.ca/print_agora.php?ag=4/

Shannon Proudfoot, The Ottawa Citizen

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Lakehead University's president has banned wireless Internet on campus over concerns about the as-yet unsubstantiated health risks, especially to young students.

Fred Gilbert, president of the Thunder Bay university, told the technology website IT Business that he wants to keep his campus WiFi-free until there is conclusive evidence that electric and magnetic fields (EMFs) do not contribute to diseases such as leukemia and brain tumours.

"While the jury's still out on this one, I'm not going to put (WiFi) in place," Mr. Gilbert said. According to the website, the move was announced at a town hall meeting last fall.

Mr. Gilbert acknowledged the risks were probably highest around antennas and "hot spots," but he said that's where students are most likely to go in search of a reliable signal.

Anil Somayaji, assistant professor of computer science at Carleton University, said that the health effects of wireless technology are not yet known. However, he viewed Lakehead's policy as "somewhat foolish," because cellphones, microwaves and cordless phones use similar frequencies but at considerably higher power.

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