Granny Uses Super Wi-Fi to Watch YouTube Videos

By Nicholas Jackson

Leticia Aquirre is the country’s first resident to participate in a trial for Wi-Fi transmitted over a new chunk of spectrum

Now that television has moved into the digital space, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) decided to open up a chunk of spectrum between 50 MHz and 700 MHz for white space broadband Wi-

Fi; it was previously used to transmit analog TV programming.

Google, interested in the business possibilities that the white space could provide (Larry Page once called it Wi-Fi on steroids), is testing so-called Super Wi-Fi at a hospital in Ohio. But the Wi-Fi, which can travel for miles and pass through wall of brick because it’s on a lower frequency than we're used to, had not been tested in a residential setting. Until now.

Rice University teamed up with a nonprofit in Houston to make Leticia Aquirre, a Houston grandmother, the country's first Super Wi-Fi user. "A working grandmother, [Aquirre] says she has mostly used the Internet in the past to check that her paychecks have been deposited," according to Fast Company. "When it works, that is." Aquirre lives on the outskirts of a small area served by Houston’s Technology for All. When the trees around her house started to fill out with leaves, Aquirre would frequently lose her already-weak signal completely.

Looking for a place to test the Super Wi-Fi, individuals working at Rice University noticed Aquirre's poor connection. They called and asked if they could install the necessary antenna. "She was super happy when we called up," Ryan Guerra, a Rice graduate student, told Fast Company.

The antenna was installed about two weeks ago and, with an iPad 2 that the university gave her, Aquirre has been using her new Super Wi-Fi to watch videos on YouTube, check her email and stream music from Pandora while she’s relaxing or exercising.

Image: Rice University.

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