Man sat at a desk typing on a laptop.

LIGHTHOUSE

FREE DIGITAL INFORMATION FROM ANYWHERE ON EARTH

By OuterNet

Project URL: outernet.is/lighthouse
Project Twitter: @OuternetForAll

Organisation URL: outernet.is

- Economic Empowerment
- Social Exclusion
- Geolocation
- Internet

Outernet is a revolutionary network of six geostationary satellites that hosts content and casts the data back down to earth. The media uploaded and available ranges from Wikipedia entries, Project Gutenberg eBooks, news, crop prices, and more.

Three billion people don't have open access to the internet and, through a one-way stream accessible to 99% of global population, the project aims to make information freely available to everyone.

Accessing Outernet requires some hardware, but after that your only limits are data (1GB per day globally, and 100GB per day in sub-Saharan Africa). The organisation has helpful material to build your own device, but also provides Lighthouse – a solution to access Outernet for just under $100 (£65).

Lighthouse is only 7" x 5.5" x 1.5" and connects to a satellite dish (you have to buy your own, but they're widely available and used globally. Outernet sells a 90cm dish for $60 [£40] through their website). The device hosts a local network over WiFi for up to five WiFi-enabled smartphones, computers and more. Each of these can access Outernet files at zero cost.

The target use-cases for Lighthouse are low-resource schools, refugee camps, health centres and the home. At the Za'atari refugee camp in Jordan, for instance, a digital maker lab ROW3D is using Lighthouse to provide both up-to-date information on the Syrian crisis as well as to support the lab with digital fabrication media. In Nigeria, Creative Commons school programmes now keep sending students teaching resources and material for free – even after they leave – using Lighthouse.

If you have a satellite dish at home, you can likely use Lighthouse; the bands for the data feed are the same as for free TV. Check out the website for more, and you can even submit your own information to the Outernet uplink.