

## MOBILE INTERNET

Is your smartphone or tablet always connected to the Internet? Millions have this always-on connection to access their e-mail, favorite websites, cloud services, and apps from anywhere at any time. What can be confusing to many is the variety of connection devices, data plans, and penalties for exceeding usage limits.

**Devices** There are many devices that can help you get Internet access from wherever you are.

- 1 ● **Smartphones.** Most modern smartphones are capable of accessing the Internet via Wi-Fi and 3G or 4G networks.
- 2 ● **Tablets.** Most tablets will provide Wi-Fi access, but to get 3G or 4G capabilities, you will generally have to purchase a higher-priced model.
- 3 ● **Laptops.** By inserting a USB modem, almost all laptops can access the Internet through a 3G or 4G network.
- 4 ● **Mobile hotspot device.** This is a stand-alone device that connects to a 3G or 4G network. It will then allow multiple devices near it to access the Internet via a Wi-Fi connection.

Many smartphones can provide Wi-Fi sharing, or tethering, like a mobile hotspot device. However, you may have to pay an additional monthly fee.

**Data Plans** A data plan defines how much data you can download using your 3G or 4G connection. These plans can be very confusing, but for most individuals, the plan that gives you a few gigabytes per month is best. Although a few providers have unlimited data plans, they may slow down, or throttle, your connection speed significantly if they deem that your usage is excessive.

**Overage Charges** If you exceed the monthly data limit, wireless providers will start charging overage fees. For example, one provider charges \$10 for every extra gigabyte used. To minimize overage charges, consider the following:

- 1 ● **Wi-Fi access points.** Whenever possible, use a Wi-Fi connection. These connections are not subject to your data plan limits. So if you are in a coffee shop that offers free Wi-Fi, use it!
- 2 ● **Streaming music/video.** Streaming too much of any media can quickly become a problem. The solution: Be selective when watching TV shows, movies, and YouTube videos, and try to store some of your music on your device.
- 3 ● **Downloading.** Limit your downloading of new apps and music to Wi-Fi connections only. Many programs and MP3 files can reach (or even exceed) a size of 10 MB.
- 4 ● **Monitor your data usage.** Most wireless companies provide a free app that helps you monitor your minutes, text messages, and data. Keep an eye on this.

The web is continually changing, and some of the specifics presented in this Making IT Work for You may have changed.

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