

Mobile Hotspots

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What's a Mobile Hotspot?

- Device or software that converts a cellular (3G/4G) data connection into a WiFi signal that can be shared by multiple devices.
- Also known as
 - WiFi tethering
 - MiFi
 - Personal Hotspot

WHY?

- Growing number of devices can make use of a mobile internet connection
 - iPod Touch
 - iPads
 - Laptops
 - Portable Game Consoles
- Mobile hotspots can provide internet access to all your devices over one connection for one price.

Mobile Hotspot Types

- Software built into phones (Personal Hotspot)
- Dedicated devices (MiFis, etc..)
- Mobile Hotspot Adapters

iPhone Personal Hotspot

- iPhone 4 only
 - Requires iOS 4.3 for AT&T iPhones
- Add hotspot plan through your carrier
 - Cost is added to your existing bill
 - Can be turned on and off monthly
- AT&T iPhone users lose unlimited data plan if they sign up for personal hotspot service

Personal Hotspot Data Plans

- AT&T
 - 2GB data for \$20
 - DataPro plan (2GB/\$25) required
 - \$10 for each additional GB
- Verizon
 - 2GB data for \$20
 - Standard data plan (\$30) required
 - Can only use 2GB for hotspot service
 - \$20 for each additional GB

Pros and Cons

- Pros

- Convenient
- Attractive data plan rates (for existing iPhone owners)
- Share connection with multiple wi-fi devices
 - AT&T up to 3, Verizon up to 5

- Cons

- High cost of entry for non-smartphone owners (\$100+/month)
- Incompatible with older WiFi devices (802.11b)
- Requires a little babysitting

Personal Hotspot is best for...

- PERSONAL use
 - Used in conjunction with YOUR OWN iPads, laptops, etc.
- Consider alternatives if....
 - You frequently share the connection with others.
 - You are not satisfied with your phone carriers data service.

Questions

- Understanding Personal Hotspot
 - <http://support.apple.com/kb/HT4517>

“MiFi” Dedicated Devices

- Standalone device that provides internet service to all of your WiFi devices.
- Separate bill from the carrier of your choice
- Data plans available in contract and prepaid versions

MiFi (3G) Contract Data Plans

- AT&T

- \$49.99 MiFi
- \$35 / 200MB
- \$60 / 5GB
- \$.05 - \$.10 per MB overage

- Sprint

- \$49.99 MiFi
- \$60 / 5GB
- \$.05 per MB overage

- Verizon

- Free MiFi
- \$35 / 3GB
- \$50 / 5GB
- \$80 / 10GB
- \$10 per GB overage

- All plans require a 2 year contract

Who needs another contract?!

- Very few
- Consider a contract plan ONLY if you use a LOT of data EVERY month
 - Long commute, frequent traveler etc.
- Otherwise consider prepaid MiFis
 - Pay only when you need them
 - No overage fees
 - Must pay “full” price for the MiFi

MiFi (3G) Prepaid Data Plans

- Verizon / AT&T
 - \$159.99 / \$299.99 MiFi
 - \$10/day 100MB
 - \$30/week 300MB
 - \$80/month 5GB
- Cricket (nationwide)
 - \$109.99 MiFi
 - \$60/month 7.5GB
 - Speed reduced after 7.5GB
- Virgin Mobile
 - \$129.99 MiFi
 - \$10/10 days 100MB
 - \$20/month 1GB
 - Walmart exclusive
 - \$50/month 2.5GB
 - Speed reduced after 2.5 GB

Pros and Cons

- Pros
 - Set it and forget it (no babysitting)
 - Choose carrier independent of your devices
 - Easy to share device (and bill) with others
 - Compatible with older WiFi devices
- Cons
 - Another device

MiFi is best for...

- Those who frequently share the connection with others
- Multi-person households
- Those who use more data than personal hotspots allow
- Consider alternatives if...
 - You need to support more than 5 devices at once
 - You would like to utilize an existing mobile broadband device (tethered phone, USB stick etc.)
 - You want more carrier choices

Questions

- Virgin Mobile Broadband2Go
 - <http://www.virginmobileusa.com/mobile-broadband/mifi-2200.html>
- Cricket
 - <http://www.mycricket.com/broadband/devices>

Mobile Hotspot Adapters

- Standalone device that allows you to share an internet connection from another type of device over wifi
 - Tethered phone
 - USB stick
 - MiFi
- Cradlepoint PHS-300

Cradlepoint PHS-300

- \$79.99 - \$179.99
 - Shop around
- B.Y.O.C. (Bring your own connection)
- Specifications & Supported Devices
 - <http://www.cradlepoint.com/products/phs300-personal-wifi-hotspot-3g4g>

Pros and Cons

- Pros

- Supports up to 16 simultaneous connections
 - MiFi supports up to 5
- Allows you to reuse an existing internet device and data plan
- Larger choice of carriers (including international)
- Easy to share device (and bill) with others
- Compatible with older WiFi devices

- Cons

- Larger than a MiFi
- iPhone tethering not supported

Hotspot Adapter is best for...

- Those who need to provide access to large groups or many devices
 - 16 simultaneous connections
- Those who already have USB sticks or USB tethering capable phones
- Those interested in a carrier that doesn't have a MiFi device
 - T-Mobile

Questions

- Cradlepoint PHS-300
 - <http://www.cradlepoint.com/products/phs300-personal-wifi-hotspot-3g4g>

How much data do I use?

- E-mail (no attachment) 10 KB
- Avg Web Page Lookup 1.5 MB
- High Quality Photo UL/DL 1 MB
- Audio Streaming 34 MB / hour
 - Pandora
- Low Quality Video Stream 46 MB / hour
- High Quality Video Stream 356 MB / hour
 - (1 GB = 1024 MB) (1 MB = 1024 KB)

How much data do I use?

- iOS
 - Download Meter
 - \$1.99 available in the App Store
- Mac OS X
 - iStat Pro Dashboard widget
 - Free
 - <http://www.islayer.com/apps/istatpro/>
- Demo

Mobile Data Do's and Don'ts

- DO: Plan ahead when traveling overseas
 - <http://xcomglobal.com>
 - MiFi rentals in 45 countries
 - \$17.95 per day / “unlimited” data
 - AT&T charges \$19.50 per MB overseas
- DO: Keep an eye on your laptop data usage
 - Beware of background downloads
- DO: Expect network congestion during peak hours
- DON'T: Watch too much streaming video
 - 10 minute Youtube video = ~50 MB

Questions

- PDF copy of this presentation available on ACAMUG.org

Raffle

- Virgin Mobile Broadband2Go MiFi device
- Virgin Mobile \$20 top-up card
 - Good for 1GB of data over 30 days
- \$160 value (after taxes)
- Ticket prices
 - \$5 per ticket
 - \$10 for 3