

Get Connected:

11 Tips

about internet
and phone deals

A Guide to Staying Connected

Pretty soon children will be born digitally compatible, like in *The Matrix*. Unfortunately, this hasn't happened yet (Or has it? Never mind....) Regardless, we all need to know the best ways to stay connected without being gouged. Ask yourself the following questions to make sure you're getting the best deals and service:

1. Home Internet for Students

For many of you, this is your first time away from home. You haven't had to set up home internet before and maybe aren't aware of the savings a student card can get you.

Rogers and Bell have student plans that usually last 8 months before going back up to their regular rates. If you are living in a house with other students, feel free to

switch the ownership account around, say, every 8 months or so. But you didn't hear that here.

2. In Monopoly, not everybody wins

There are two big names in Canadian internet service: Rogers and Bell. They have a monopoly on the in-home market.

However, be aware of other providers, such as Techsavvy, who offer lower rates because they are so small. Being small has its perks -as much as 50 per cent lower than those other internet giants.

3. Buy your cell phone outright

It's cheaper, in the long run, to buy your smart phone outright. \$900 down on an iPhone or Galaxy may seem like a lot, but if you can swing it, breaks the chains of oppressive, corporate contracts.

Buy your cell phone outright (cont.)

It also gives you a little more say about the plan you get since you are free to choose any provider. These providers may be a little more forgiving when vying for your business. And they want your business.

2. Unlimited data, unlimited possibilities

With new smart phones you can tether your data service on your phone through your laptop computer, allowing you to cruise the interwebs from anywhere.

If you don't have home internet access, you can always use the wireless hotspot service provided on most smart phone to access the internet. It's a relatively simple procedure that connects your wireless device to any Bluetooth enabled computer.

However, user be wary: if you don't have an unlimited data plan on your smartphone,

downloading & data caps (cont.)

you could end up paying an astronomical amount of overage fees (we're talking hundreds of dollars if you're not careful). Also, wireless hotspots are bottlenecked, meaning that if you want to download anything larger than an MP3, it will take forever.

Netflix and any other kind of large downloading can cause problems with speed, but also your monthly bill. While Netflix has come a long way in the last five years—they've recently capped their output service to only 9 gigs, as opposed to 29—using their service can still eat away at your monthly gig cap and your wallet.

This goes for downloading movies too, as large files take more of a toll on your service, especially during peak times (usually any-time between 5 and 10 pm).

5. Traveling and beyond

Traveling out of the country? Make sure you inform your cell phone provider, because they can usually provide a limited plan to service your calls and text messages when overseas or across a border.

Too many customers have gotten nicked for roaming fees of upwards of \$1000 for not making arrangements with their provider before hand.

Finally, there's always the radical option of just turning off your phone!

6. Know what you want

Both cell phone and internet providers' customer service agents are trained to try and upsell you. It may be cheaper to bundle your internet, cellphone and home cable,

Know what you want (cont.)

but if you don't use any one of the those three, that's just wasted money. Tell them what you want and make them tailor the service to you. There's no need to pay for stuff you'll never use.

7. Shop around

Now, if you call Rogers and tell them that, say, Techsavvy will give you a better deal on highspeed internet, Rogers will have no choice but to offer you a better deal. This also goes for cellphone providers.

It's capitalism baby, use it to your advantage.

8. Call Display, or Voice Messaging, not both.

This one usually makes people cringe. "But what if I miss a call?", they say, clutching their phones to their chests. Well, either of these options will let you know who called you. Is it important that the caller be able

Display or Messaging (cont.)

to leave you a message? Or is it good enough to identify who called so you know who you need to call back? These two services do virtually the same thing. Why pay \$10 for each of them?

9. Buying a Phone off Kijiji is a thing of the past

Don't let some shifty-eyed, trench-coated dude in the back of a van sell you a repurposed iPhone claiming that it's been unlocked. It's just not true. 95 percent of the time, a phone cannot be unlocked, especially newer phones. In about 5 years time, unlocking phones will be virtually non-existent due to Apple and Google's priority service contracts.

So don't get duped. Buy from a reputable source. It's cheaper in the long run.

10. Be a wi-fi hunter

Most places - coffee shops, campuses, entire downtown areas - are now set up to be wirelessly connected. Search these places out like lifeboats in the sea. You get internet access, often at a faster rate, for free.

Why pay for internet when someone else will. It's not theft, it's public domain, like Christmas music, so have a jolly ol' time.

11. Don't be afraid to voice your concerns

Most internet and phone providers are not infallible and they know it. If something is weird or outrageous on your bill, give them a call and make them explain every last detail. Usually, once the call has been escalated, your genuine (or even fake) ignorance can pay off in the form of fees or credits the company reserves specially to make their clients happy. So if you've got a beef, make it loud. But hey, be nice.

