

Phone Service – What to Know

December, 2022

Monthly vs as-needed

- Most cell phone service “talk” plans available today incur a *monthly charge*.
 - This is how our land-line phone programs worked (or work).
- However, if you use your phone on an irregular basis, you may want to consider a *pay-as-you-go* plan.

Metered vs unlimited

- If you have a monthly service, it usually includes some or all these services:
 - Talk (phone calls)
 - Texting
 - Data (Internet access)
- Any or all of these may be *metered* (limited) or *unlimited*.
 - Select a plan that meets your needs.
- If you are on a metered plan, check your carrier’s website or your monthly bill to learn whether they support *rollover* of unused capacity in any or all the three areas.

Long distance vs local

- Generally, *long distance charges* no longer apply, at least for domestic calls.
 - Extra charges for international calls varies by country and carrier.
 - Check your carrier’s website for specifics.

International travel? Plan ahead!

- If you are traveling abroad, you may incur *extreme charges* when using your phone for any reason.
- For example, I have seen charges of *\$4.95/minute* for phone calls.
- Some carriers include *Canada and Mexico* as “local” and most offer *short-term international plans* for a flat fee when you travel.

- A big offender in this area is the unintended use of your *data plan*.
 - For example, you take pictures while on vacation and you have your phone set to upload them to the Internet using your data plan.
- iOS and Android each have settings that will limit data usage by apps to *Wi-Fi only* rather than using your data plan.
- Another thing to watch for: do not update your phone's operating system or apps via your data plan while abroad.
 - This can lead to *many megabytes* of data being used and extreme fees!



Mobile hotspots

<https://www.intel.com/content/www/us/en/tech-tips-and-tricks/what-is-a-hotspot.html>

- A *hotspot* is a physical location where people can access the Internet, typically using Wi-Fi, via a wireless local area network (WLAN) with a router connected to an Internet service provider.
- Most people refer to these locations as *Wi-Fi hotspots* or *Wi-Fi connections*.
- A *mobile hotspot* (or *portable hotspot*) is a hotspot that's just that – mobile!
 - While a “regular” Wi-Fi hotspot is tied to a physical location, you can create a mobile hotspot by using your smartphone's data connection to connect your tablet or laptop to the Internet.
- At home, you probably have a *Wi-Fi router* by which you connect your devices to the Internet.
- When you use your cell phone as a mobile hotspot, your phone is playing the part of the router, giving your devices access to the Internet.
- This can be very useful if you need Internet access at someplace where it is unavailable or where it will cost you (e.g., at some airports).
- Some plans include mobile hotspot capability as part of the monthly cost, while other plans charge extra for its usage.
- Even if you have a plan with unlimited data usage, the plan almost certainly limits your hotspot data usage.

Be aware of your mobile hotspot usage

- My cellular data plan is unlimited, but it limits monthly mobile hotspot usage to *40GB*.
 - That may sound like a lot of data, but if you like to watch live sporting events, movies, or even a multitude of humorous cat videos, you may chew through that limit in a few days.



Mobile hotspots: how do I ... ?

- How do you set up a mobile hotspot?
 - As with most computer/tablet/mobile processes, setup will differ between operating systems and carriers.
- Fortunately, you can seek help at:
 - Your carrier's website;
 - YouTube; and
 - Your favorite search engine.

The Mayfield example

- My setup:
 - Samsung Galaxy S21 phone;
 - Running Android 13 operating system; and
 - Using T-Mobile as the phone carrier.
- Go to *Settings* on my phone;
 - Search for "*hotspot*";
 - Select result "*Mobile Hotspot*";
 - Click on the *Mobile Hotspot* item, then *Configure* to set a password;
 - Tap on the *slider button* to enable the mobile hotspot; and
 - Devices now see my phone, *K5HUN S21*, and can connect to it using the password.

Don't forget to turn off the light

- I recommend you disable your mobile hotspot when you no longer need it!
- If not, your tablet or laptop could *continue to use your mobile hotspot data* even if Wi-Fi is available.



Questions?

- Feel free to contact me at blayne.mayfield@okstate.edu.