Reducing Usage on a Service Plan

When purchasing a service plan you should carefully choose your data allowances based on the amount you estimate for business or personal use. However, people rarely account for uploads and downloads going on in the background. These can quickly consume a sizeable portion of your data plan and bandwidth. This page will be discussing the common causes of unexpected data consumption, as well as how to reduce it.

The Perils of Streaming Services:

Youtube, Netflix, Pandora, and other media streaming services require large download amounts that will accumulate very quickly. Many music services such as Pandora typically use around 57.8MB per hour at a standard audio quality rate. However, video streaming sites usually offer choices in quality settings that will help to reduce the consumption of data. The table below displays average usage data for the quality settings on Netflix and Youtube:

Youtube Usage by Video Quality					
Video Quality	240p	360p	480p	720p	1080p
Usage (per 5 minute video)	8MB	13MB	20MB	37MB	62MB

* Video Quality settings can be changed by clicking on the Gear icon in the video player and selecting from the Quality drop-down menu.

Netflix Usage by Video Quality					
Video Quality	Good	Better	Best - Standard Definition	HD	Ultra HD
Usage (per hour)	310MB	720MB	1GB	2.3GB	7GB

* Quality settings located under Your Account & Help. Scroll down to "Watching Instantly On Your TV or Computer" and click on the link for "Manage Video Quality".

TV sticks, such as Google's Chromecast or Amazon's FireTV, can also download updates automatically and therefore can be problematic when limiting usage. To ensure that these devices are not unknowingly using data, disconnect them from their power source when not being used.

Social Media:

Social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram are almost constantly uploading and downloading information to keep their news feeds up to date. This will cause significant data consumption, especially with videos that play automatically.

A way to reduce usage on sites such as these is to prevent videos from playing automatically. This can be accomplished by following the instructions below:

For Android devices:

Under **Account Settings** in the **Facebook** app, disable video auto-play.

For iPhones:

Select the **Settings** app, select **Facebook**, and then select **Settings**. Click the "Auto-play" tab and turn video auto-play off.

For Computers:

Select the **Options** drop-down menu from the top right and select **Settings**.

Select **Videos** on the left and turn "Auto-play Videos" to **OFF**.

Turning off Automatic Updates and Syncing:

Automatic updates, while useful for keeping all of your applications and software at the newest version, can be large downloads at times. This could use up a portion of the data on your plan and you may never know that it is happening. Shown below are instructions on how to turn off automatic updates on a number of systems.

Windows Systems:

XP:

Click the **Start** button, select **Run**, type "sysdm.cpl" into the box, and press **ENTER**. Navigate to the **Automatic Updates** tab and then select "Notify me but don't automatically download or install them". After this has been completed, press **OK**.

Vista / 7:

Click the **Start** button, type "windows update" into the search bar, and then select the **Windows Update** program. Select **Change Settings** from the left-hand pane. Under **Recommended Updates**, click the drop-down box and select "Check for updates but let me choose whether to download and install them". After this has been completed, press **OK**.

Windows 8:

Move the mouse to the right-hand side of the desktop and click **Settings**. Select **Control Panel** and (depending on your view) select either **System and Security** and select "Turn automatic updating on or off" from the left-hand menu or select **Windows Update**. From the drop-down box, select "Check for updates but let me choose whether to download and install them". After this has been completed, click **OK**.

Apple Systems:

<u>iOS:</u>

To prevent any apps from updating, select the **Settings** app and locate "iTunes & App Store". Under the **Automatic Downloads** section, slide the switch for **Updates** and any other switches available (such as **Music**, **Apps**, and **Books**) to the off position.

To disable iCloud updates, navigate back to the **Settings** app and select **iCloud**. From here, you can turn off iCloud updates. This will prevent uploads and downloads from occurring without your permission.

<u>Mac OSX:</u>

To prevent any apps from updating, select GO from the top left-hand side of the screen. Within this menu, select System Preferences and click the App Store to uncheck "Automatically Check for Updates".

To disable iCloud updates, select the Apple menu and click System Preferences. Select iCloud and then deselect each feature that you would like to disabled (such as Contacts, iCloud Drive, etc.).

Android:

<u>Mobile devices:</u>

To disable app from updating, open the **Play Store** app and tap the **slide out menu** in the upper left corner, displayed by **three horizontal lines**. Select **Settings** and click on **Auto-update Apps**. From here, you can select the option "Do not auto-update apps".

In order to disable the syncing of your Google account, open the **Settings** app and select **Accounts**. Within this menu, select **Accounts & Sync or Data Synchronization**. Then, select the account and then deselect the services for which you would like to disable syncing.

Data Storage Services:

These services, such as Google Drive and Dropbox, work in the background to ensure that all folders are kept up to date between your computer and the online storage location. This also applies to online music storage that has automatic syncing features. If folders are automatically set to update, this could lead to large bandwidth usage and data overages. To prevent this from happening, exit out of or disable these online services on your computer and ensure that their notification icons in the bottom toolbar are no longer present.

"No Internet" Issue:

If a problem arises with your system that does not allow you online although your modem has all five green lights, it is possible that the modem is using the maximum number of its NAT sessions. NAT sessions are what the modem uses to allow multiple computers to use its IP address. If these reach a maximum amount, the modem will begin to drop sessions and thereby restrict access to the network. The most common cause of this issue is printer

software that is constantly reaching out to identify a printer. To clear this error, the software or

device causing the issue must be deactivated and the modem should be rebooted.

If you are experiencing this issue, please feel free to contact our Technical Support

department at **757-312-8300 Option 2** and we will be glad to assist you.