Data plan and internet basics

What's an App? Applications, known as Apps, are programs that provide services or information such as fitness apps to measure your activities, apps to order a taxi, or food from a restaurant. There are apps for just about any purpose. Users download Apps from the Internet.

Data Plan and Cellular Service. Smartphones require a data plan. This is what enables the phone to be connected to the world. Generally, phones operate on a monthly service plan with a set amount of data. There are charges for additional data if you use up your set amount. It is possible to get unlimited data, but it is the most expensive option.

Free Wifi: Tablets or computers do not <u>require</u> a monthly service plan. You can connect to a wireless network in a public place for free. Libraries and coffee shops generally have free wi-fi. In this way, you can interact with the Internet or family friends with no charge to yourself. However, like many free things, sometimes wi-fi is not reliable. To connect to wifi does require knowledge of how to get your device to recognize the wifi and connect. Like learning new things, once you practice and take notes, it gets easier.

What is Data Use I can't see it? Each time you have an interaction with the outside world through your devise, you are using data. For example, if you send or receive an email, photo or video, you are using data. If you take notes or use tools like the calculator, you are not using data. If you are playing a game just on your device by yourself, you are not using data. If you download a movie you are using lots of data. Mostly, when you are interacting with the outside world, you use data.

Fees for Apps and Services: In addition to a monthly service plan, some Apps have costs associated with them, such as a fee to download. To use apps with costs (like music from Itunes, ordering an Uber, or having a pizza delivered), users use a credit card. When you sign up for an App that has a costs, you register your credit card with the app, so you do not have to have it physically present each time you use it– the device holds the info securely.
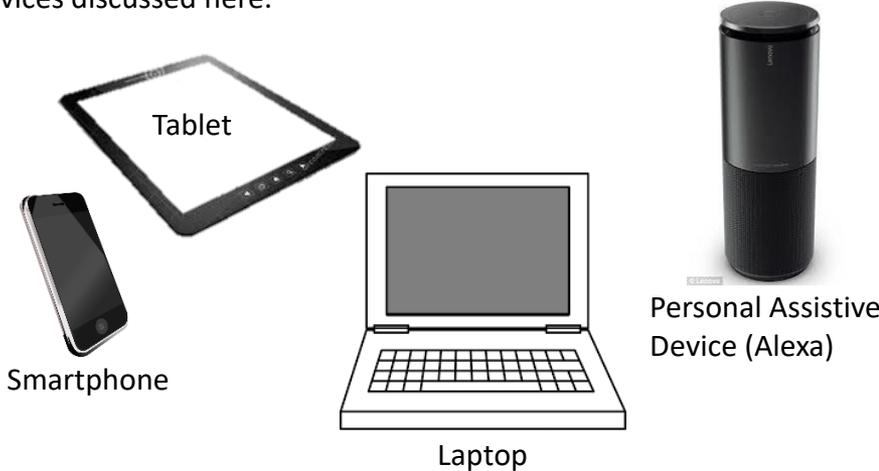
Technology Device Comparison Guide

Being connected to the Internet can open a world of exploring, learning and engagement with family and friends. And nowadays, being connected does not have to be expensive. Before getting connected understand a few things which are related to all of the devices discussed here.

Tablet

Smartphone

Laptop

Personal Assistive Device (Alexa)

Steps to Buying A Device to Connect you to the Internet:

1. Find a friend or family member to help.

2. Find a location that has sample devices and spend a lot of time using them and having a sales person show them to you.

3. Be insistent that the sales person speak slowly and translate the technology mumbo-jumbo into language that you understand. Don't let them make you feel dumb.

4. Remember that you will probably not need the high end machine.

5. Ask a lot of questions about maintenance and how you get help if something goes wrong.

6. If the store has classes about using the device, take advantage of them.

7. Ask lots of questions and be patient with salespeople who may not know how to translate. This is a reflection on them – not you.

Smart phone

Advantages	Disadvantages
• Least expensive option for constant connectivity • Puts many functions into one device • Can "sync" with other IT devices like a Tablet or Alexa.	• Small – limited screen—difficult to read • Typing can be difficult • Requires a monthly phone plan – recurring costs

Functions: Smart phones have a phone, a camera, an audio recorder, calculator, and access to the Internet. Phones also have a text feature to send/receive a message, photo or internet link to other smartphone users. Email can be set up apps and internet browsing. **COST**: Smart phones costs from $50-$600.

Lap Top Computer

Advantages	Disadvantages
• Large screen • Sturdier than a tablet • Monthly data plan not required (public wifi). • Many functions on one device	• Cost is $250 upward • Not as friendly to non-techie user because of maintenance • Can come with a DVD player to play movies • Can be heavy to carry

Functions: Computers have a camera, an audio recorder, a calculator, and access to the internet. Computers also have software for writing, doing math calculations and creating graphics. Users can set up email on a computer as well as links to social media sites like Facebook. **COST**: $250-$2000

A desktop and lap top have the same functions. A desk top is heavier and not meant to be moved. This means that to access the internet with a desktop, you most likely need to have some sort of internet access in your home, which is a monthly fee. If you live is a building with wifi service then you would not have to have internet service in your home. However, shared wifi can be unreliable.

Tablet

Advantages	Disadvantages
• Larger screen space and can have a keyboard • Lightweight • Initial cost is low • Monthly data plan not required (public wifi). • Many functions in one device	• Small – limited screen • Typing can be difficult – but some Tablets can be adapted with keyboards. • Limited use without Internet Connection

Functions: Tablets have cameras, audio recorders, calculators, and access to the internet. Tablets have notetaking feature where you can write lists or whatever you like. Users can set up email as well as links to social media sites. Tablets have apps and games. **COST**: $40-400.

Personal Assistive Devices (Echo, Alexa)

Advantages	Disadvantages
• Fun – can provide music, answers to questions • Good for persons with disabilities or unable to use keyboards • Can be paired to be used in emergencies	• New technology so durability over time is not known • Requires an internet connection • Requires pairing with another device (phone, tablet)

Functions: Personal Assistive Devices are the newest trend in home technology and have been reviewed very positively for seniors. These are speakers that respond to the sound of your voice and can do things like set reminders, make lists, look up facts on the Internet, play music or otherwise respond to information needs. There is some work to setting them up, linking to other tools and properly using them. There is not a specific cost to maintain a personal assistive device, but it is linked to another device there are implications on data use. **COST:** $50-$150**.**