How to minimise using your data package allowance

Modern Smart Phones and tablets can be data hungry and especially when the service has been paid for via a data allocation, clients are often surprised about the amount of data utilised.

Often apps are programmed or configured to update themselves when connected to Wi-Fi and in a standby mode (not in use/locked). They may also do "automatic updates" which generally refers to updating to the latest version of app during this time. By taking some of the below steps you will be able to minimise your data package allowance:

a) Logging Out of the network immediately after use.

Generally to logout you should go to http:// logout.vitalwifi.com however the process to logout varies by venue. Please check locally with a member of staff who will be able to direct you to the logout page if the link above does not work.

b) Disabling automatic app & operating system updates

As you may be aware updates are regularly released to the app store and often by default the settings are that when connected to Wi-Fi they will download the update ready to install on your device at a convenient time (usually overnight).   We recommend that when using a Wi-Fi package that has an allowance, the automatic download settings turned off to ensure that is does not use your data.

As an example 4 common apps (Facebook, Facebook Messenger, Gmail, Outlook) were released to the Apple App Store within a matter of days of each other in April 2017 which totalled 595mb. Similar results were experienced in the Google Play Store.

Apple Devices:
Settings>iTunes & App Store – Ensure that the slider is moved to the left so that all options are greyed out.

c) In-app updates and music/photo Services

In-app updates may occur when you load the app on your mobile/tablet device. Once opened they use data to refresh the content within the app if they are connected to an online service. Examples of this are music apps like Apple Music & Spotify, Photos apps like Instagram & Flickr and even news apps such BBC news & CNN.   Generally data can be turned off in the Settings section of your device for the specific app you wish to use.

Example 1: If you are subscribed to a public playlist on Apple Music or Spotify, when you load the app any additions to that playlist will be downloaded automatically and will use your data.

Example 2: If you log into a game which is linked to Facebook or an online account, the app can auto update itself to display high scores, gifts, friends online status etc amongst other things which will all use data and is out of our control.

Example 3: When opening the BBC or CNN news app all content as of that point in time will be updated in the app so that it can be read offline.

d) Disabling Apps that are not being used to avoid Data use in the background.

Features such as "background app refresh" allows apps that are installed on your phone to connect to the Wi-Fi network even if they are not open so that they are already up to date once you open them. You can disable this completely or you can grant the privilege to specific apps only. For an Apple device this setting can be found in:

Settings > General > Background App Refresh

e) Cloud Data backups Services

Apps that make use of data backup services such as Apple's iCloud Drive, Dropbox, OneDrive and Google Drive frequently transmit data whenever changes are made to files and documents which can lead to significant data uploads. If you are paying for a Wi-Fi data allowance you may prefer that the backups do not occur and you wait until you get home to backup your data.

f) Cloud Photo backups

Services such as Apple iCloud Photo backups feature allows you to backup Photos to your iCloud account automatically. If you are taking a significant number of new photos and wish to preserve your Wi-Fi data allowance, you may prefer turn this feature off to preserve data. For Apple devices the setting can be found here:

Settings > iCloud > Photos > iCloud Photo Library

If requested, Vital Wifi will provide a data usage listing which will include:
Venue Name, Client Name, Device MAC, Date and Time, Download MB, Upload MB and Total MB. Vital Wifi are unable to provide a listing of sites visited for Data Protection reasons. *Please note that your ISP at home, would also not provide this information if requested.*

Vital Wifi systems utilise enterprise grade routers and the methods used to calculate data usage are industry standard.   In basic terms, the process utilised for data usage monitoring includes:

The data usage is monitored by device MAC (and IP) address within the router and uploaded to the portal periodically and also at session termination. Upon "logging in" and commencing a new session, the saved portal data is downloaded to the router and logging commences. In the unlikely event that communications are lost with the portal during a session, the logged data would not be communicated and subtracted from the currently stored portal data, hence providing a fail-safe system in the clients favour. The systems are checked at regular intervals against known file sizes.