

# How to minimise using your data package allowance

Modern Smart Phones and tablets are known to use a lot of data when connected to wi-fi and in many instances when someone uses a service based on 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.**

Vital Wifi stress that when you have finished using the wi-fi you should logout of your account. To logout you should go to <http://logout.vitalwifi.com>.

Although simply turning off your Wi-Fi off will stop usage, this shows on our system on as an idle timeout and will only skew reports. From the perspective of Vital Wifi there is no way of us being able to tell if you are leaving it logged in or turning off the W-Fi and doesn't help us present factual reports, so we emphasise that you use the logout process to allow us to help resolve any issues you are having that.

## **b) Disabling automatic app and operating system updates**

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

As an example updates for 4 common apps (Facebook, Messenger, Gmail & Outlook) were released to the Apple App Store within a matter of days of each other in March 2020 totalling 839mb. Similar results were experienced in the Google Play Store.

- **Apple Devices:**

*Operating System (IOS) Updates: From IOS 12 onwards - Settings > General > Software Update > Automatic Update > Ensure that the slider is moved to the off position.*

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

- **Android Devices (dependant on Android Version):**

*Operating System Updates: Settings > Software Update > Download Updates Automatically*

*App Updates: Open Google Play > Tap the three horizontal lines (hamburger icon) on the top-left > Tap Settings > Tap Auto-update apps > Change setting to Do not auto-update apps*

As per section a, we stress that you should logout (<http://logout.vitalwifi.com>) when your device is not in use to minimise the chances of this download occurring.

### **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, friend's 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, especially if it is a shared drive and someone else is making the changes. If you are paying for a Wi-Fi data allowance you may prefer that the backups do not occur and you wait until you are able to use a non data allowance based service to backup your data. This can generally be turned off within the app or within the menus as per section d.

### **f) Cloud Photo backups**

Services such as Apple iCloud Photo or Google Photos, feature a service which is on by default allows you to backup Photos to your iCloud account automatically when on wi-fi. 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. If you have any shared cloud photo for Apple devices the setting can be found here:

*Settings > iCloud > Photos > iCloud Photos – Ensure the slider is turned off to ensure this does not backup*

### **g) Requesting usage reports**

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 client's favour. The systems are checked at regular intervals against known file sizes.*

### **Contacting Vital Wifi Support**

The above guide has been put together to help minimise and manage your data usage for paid Wi-Fi packages and is correct as per the document date. If you have any further questions, please contact the Vital Wifi support team as below making sure to include the following:

- Your username (e-mail address used on the account),
- Hotel or vessel
- Any other information which you think may be relevant to the issues you may be having. If you have any query relating to payment issues please include your transaction ID



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