How to manage usage of limited data (2GB-5GB)

Playcentre Aotearoa is paying for telephones for all centres, as well as a limited amount of wifi data for Playcentre activities only. The benefit of partnering with Digital Island is to reduce our telecoms expense down to a manageable level so that more money can go where it is needed, the children.

Most centres use data for the first 4 things below and stay within 2GB per month. Centres that are open many sessions per week, are highly digitised or use the last 3 below, may go up to 5-10GB per month.

- tablet & Discover
- laptop and Office 365 (Word, Excel, Outlook, Gmail, GoogleDocs)
- wifi printer
- learning stories (Storypark/Canva/Epsom iPrint)
- music (iHeart radio, Spotify: please play downloaded versions of songs rather than streaming)
- PA Education: students completing assignments online
- Centre Advisor: using a centre as their place of work

As we all become more digitised, centres are using more and more data. Currently we cannot provide unlimited data for 400+ centres, so we're looking for ways to work with what we have, including reviewing usage reports to see how data is consumed and listening to what centre members tell us.

Here are 17 tips from centre members:

Centre practice and culture shift:
1. tell everyone this is a Toyota not a Tesla, so we can't run too many devices at once. We must prioritise usage. For example, when parents are signing in on the tablet, restrict GoogleDocs, and when doing Education online or a Zoom meeting, connect fewer devices.
2. do not post wifi password on the wall, and do not allow usage during building hireage.
3. members who have unlimited data on their personal phones could use their own data.
4. pay attention to alert texts (80% & 100% data used) and remind members to limit usage
5. post a sign near the entrance: *"Please turn off wifi at Playcentre. Toggle 'auto-join' to 'off'. Only use wifi briefly to print learning stories or for Playcentre-related work."*
6. do not stream movies/video/music: remind members to not watch Instagram/YouTube videos or play CandyCrush. Download Spotify music at home and play downloaded versions at centre.
7. ask members to change their phone Spotify settings to 'offline mode' & set audio quality to 'low'

Digital Island Phone & Hotspot (DIPH):
8. turn the phone fully off at the end of each day – this stops accidental usage, stops background app updates, and purges memory so it functions optimally
9. restrict number of apps downloaded on the DIPH. Set phone to "do not auto-update apps"
10. restrict app data usage: in Settings: set to "restrict app background data/data saver mode"
11. set up your own alerts: in Settings/data usage/billing cycle/data warning – toggle on "data warning" and choose "2GB" or "4GB" or whatever works for your centre members

Tablet/laptop/printer/teleconferencing:
12. big updates/downloads: for software updates on the tablet/laptop or for large email attachments like photos/videos, you can take it to a home with unlimited WiFi
13. download to Documents or Desktop to work on docs and only upload to GoogleDrive for backup
14. connect laptop to printer by cable rather than by wifi
15. videoconferencing: use Teams instead of Zoom – it uses less data
16. turn off cameras – only turn on when speaking – this will save a huge chunk of data
17. turn off microphones – they also chew thru data on videocalls, especially when on for hours

Your centre is experiencing one of the benefits of amalgamating into one big Playcentre Aotearoa… bulk purchasing power. Playcentre has partnered with Digital Island (owned by Spark) to provide your centre with 9 great **DIPH**erences:

1. Portable mobile phone to take on trips and excursions (also good for evacuations and emergencies)
2. Easy roll calls during drills: bring DIPH & tablet to meeting point and tablet stays connected to internet
3. Unlimited calling in NZ/Australia
4. Unlimited texting in NZ/Australia
5. Fast, reliable data coverage
6. Wifi hot spotting to centre tablet & computer & wifi printer
7. Wifi hot spotting to a limited number of centre member's phones (please be prudent and limit use to Playcentre activities)
8. Reduced telecommunications costs and administration costs
9. Prevent any break in service when the copper broadband & landlines are phased out