



Tip Sheet

How to choose a retail service provider (RSP)

Consider these questions when choosing an RSP:

What are the costs of the plan?

When looking for an internet plan you should shop around for a deal that suits your needs. Compare plans and prices using comparator websites like finder.com.au and [WhistleOut](https://whistleout.com.au).

Do not be distracted by headline prices. Often special offers will not last for the life of the contract. Read the critical information summary to find out how much you will pay each month when any special offers expire, and if there are other upfront or equipment costs. It is also useful to check how much you will pay over the whole contract.

What download speed do I need?

If you are choosing a new RSP over the NBN, you will have a choice of download speed. Download speed is measured in megabits per second (Mbps). Every provider should advise you what the average speed will be during peak hours. They may also advise what the maximum speed is, although you may never experience this. Talk to your provider about which speed tier will suit your needs and uses.

Are there any set up fees?

Check whether there are set up or installation fees. For example, you may need to pay an upfront fee to buy a modem or have the service connected.

How much data is included in the plan?

Data allowances are measured in gigabytes (GB). Check your usage on your latest internet bill to see how much data you are likely to use per month. Use this information to choose a plan that will suit your needs. The average household uses between 50 – 160GB a month.

Contract or month to month plan?

Providers offer plans on either a contract term (usually 12 or 24 months) or a month to month basis. If you opt for a contract, your monthly fee may be less than a month to month plan, but you will probably need to pay a cancellation fee if you want to cancel the contract early.

[Australian Communications Consumer Action Network \(ACCAN\)](https://accan.org.au)
Australia's peak body representing communications consumers

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Month to month plans provide flexibility to change to a different provider if you want to, but can also sometimes have higher upfront costs and monthly fees.

Will I be charged extra fees if I go over my data allowance?

Most providers will not charge you more for exceeding your data allowance, but your internet may be slowed down for the rest of the billing month. If this happens, you can only do basic tasks like check your email. Some providers allow you to add extra data for months that you use more.

When will I be connected?

Ask the provider how long it will take for your new service to be connected. If you are switching to the NBN, it may take a number of weeks for the switchover to happen. While waiting for the switchover you should keep your existing service so you are not without a service for any time during the switchover period.

How do I monitor my data usage?

To avoid exceeding your data limit, ask your RSP how to check your data usage. Normally you will be able to login to your account on the provider's website to check your usage.

Do I need new equipment?

You may need to purchase a new modem/gateway with your plan, or equipment such as adapters so your telephone continues to work. Some providers offer this as part of the plan. You should check with the provider what equipment you need and if they supply it. This equipment is important in how your service works. Cheaper equipment may reduce the performance of your internet service, resulting in slower speeds, only working at shorter distances or not coping with a number of users at the same time. Check with your provider if the equipment is designed to handle all the tasks you want from the service.