



Tip Sheet

Mobile data: what you need to know

Most smartphone plans come with a monthly data allowance, for example 500MB or 1GB (this is how much internet use you are allowed each month). Data is measured in kilobytes (kB), megabytes (MB) and gigabytes (GB):

1024kB = 1MB

1024MB = 1GB

When you choose a mobile plan, consider how much data you use on your smartphone by looking at your existing usage. Use this information to help you select a plan that will suit your needs. If you use more than your included allowance you will be charged extra. Read ACCAN's article for more information on [excess data charges](#).

You should always keep track of how much data you use with spend management tools – usually your provider will have a smartphone app or an online account on their website where you can access this information.

Telcos are required to send you usage alerts when you reach 50, 85 and 100 per cent of your data limit. These alerts will help you keep track of your usage. Telcos are only required to send these alerts within 48 hours of you reaching a limit, so by the time you receive one you may already be over your allowance.

Some providers will charge a minimum data session. For example, even though a single Facebook status update might only use a few kB, some providers will count that as 1MB. Check your provider's website as to how you will be charged. For more information on this look at ACCAN's [Megacharge project](#).

So what does this all mean when you are using your smartphone? The table below shows some common smartphone activities and how much data they typically use.

Activity	Data usage
Sending a tweet	Minimal (a few kB)
One Facebook status update	Minimal (a few kB)
Refreshing Twitter stream (approximately 10 times)	70KB
Refreshing Facebook news feed	50-200kB
GPS maps (1 location search)	150-200kB
Email (100 sent/received without attachments)	2.5MB
Music streaming (3 minutes)	3MB
Radio streaming (10 minutes)	15MB
Email (10 sent/received with attachments)	18MB
General web browsing (30 minutes)	10-20MB
YouTube video streaming at 720p (5 minutes)	37.5MB
Downloading a standard length TV show in Standard Definition TV show	800MB
Downloading a standard length TV show in High Definition	1.5GB
Downloading a standard length movie in Standard Definition	1-1.5GB
Downloading a standard length movie in High Definition	4GB
Streaming High Definition content	Up to 3GB/hour
Navigating on Google Maps (10 minutes)	6MB

Please note this table is intended to be used as a rough guide. Data usage can vary depending on your device and the quality of content.