

TECH TIPS FOR *Travelers*

Remember when you went on vacation to unplug? You powered off your cell phone at departure, locked it in the hotel safe during your trip, and didn't turn it on again until you arrived home. Oh, how times have changed! Staying connected to friends, social networks, and even the office has become a priority for many travelers.

Traveling with and using technology during your trip poses some unique challenges. These tips can help you to protect your devices and avoid unwelcome surprises on your cellular bill.

Count the Cost – Before you leave the United States, check with your carrier to make sure you understand what the potential costs may be for voice calls, text messages, and data usage while traveling to a foreign country. Verify whether there is Wi-Fi available at your hotel or on your cruise ship, and what the cost may be for access.

Know Your Device – It may sound silly, but try out your devices before you leave! Make sure you understand what airplane mode is and how to use it, plus how to turn off cellular roaming service or change other settings as recommended by the carrier or manufacturer.

Speed Bumps – Even in places where internet is available, the connection may not be as fast or reliable as you are used to at home. It may work for accessing email or quick posts on social media, but streaming video or video chatting could be more difficult if the connection is weak. Also, some subscription services like Netflix or Hulu may have usage limitations in foreign countries.

Make the Most of Minutes – If you do have to purchase internet access and your package has a limited number of minutes, stretch your allotment by not staying "live" for the entire duration of your work session. For example, log in to download email, disconnect while you compose replies offline, and then log back in just long enough to send everything.

Plugged In – Do some research to determine whether the electrical system of your destination requires an adapter (to change the shape of the plug) or a converter (to adjust the voltage/frequency of the electric connection). An outlet strip is handy for rooms that don't have many outlets, and using one that is a surge protector adds extra protection for your electronic devices. BUT - don't bring a surge protector on a cruise ship - they are banned.

Keep it Safe – Phones, tablets, and laptops are definitely a target for thieves, so take common sense precautions: Don't leave a phone



or tablet unattended poolside, keep devices locked in your room safe when not in use, and avoid carrying them in spots that are easy for pickpockets to access. Know how to track, disable, or even completely wipe your phone if it should happen to fall into the wrong hands.

With a little advance preparation, you can stay connected and protected during your travels. Of course, if you still prefer to unplug before you unwind, that's a great idea too!