

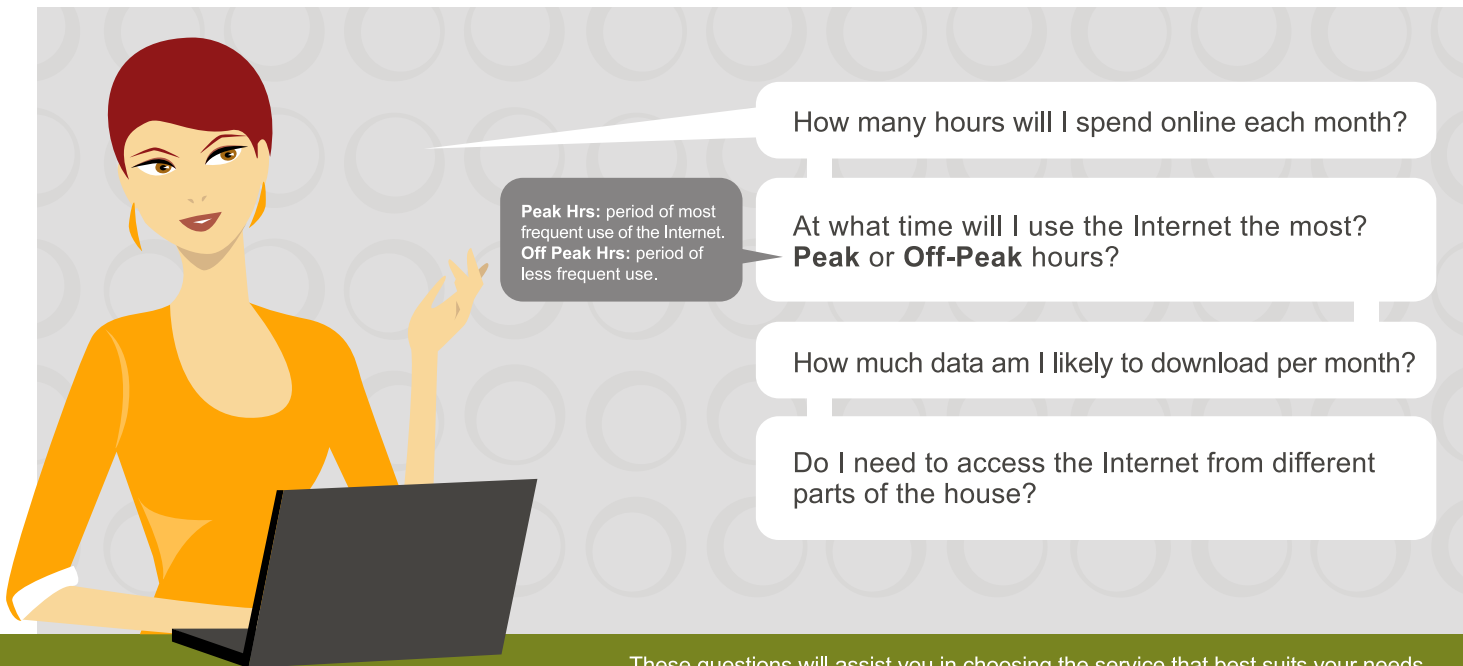
CONSUMER GUIDES

a guide to consumers of electronic communication services

Internet



Subscribing to an Internet Service Provider (ISP)



These questions will assist you in choosing the service that best suits your needs.

Types of Internet services you may choose from

Dial-Up Internet Connection

- Dial-up Internet **uses your telephone line** to connect to the Internet.
- When connected to the Internet you will **not be able to make or receive calls** from your fixed telephone line.
- You are **not automatically connected** to the Internet when you switch on your computer.
- **Download speeds do not exceed 56kbps.** This speed is sufficient to send and receive e-mails and to browse the Internet.
- You **cannot watch videos or hear music** directly over the Internet (**streaming**).

Download Speed: this is the speed with which you can transfer data onto your computer. This is measured in Kilobits per second (Kbps), where 1000 Kbps is equal to 1Megabit per second (Mbps).

Broadband Internet Connection

- Broadband internet **uses a telephone line, cable or antenna** to connect to the Internet.
- When connected to the Internet you will still be able to **make and receive calls** from your fixed telephone line.
- **You are automatically connected** to the Internet (always-on) when you switch on your computer.
- **High-speed Internet connections;** usually download speeds equal to 2Mbps or faster.

Types of Broadband Internet:

ADSL

- This service is provided over the **telephone lines** installed at your property.
- You will require an **ADSL modem** to be connected to your computer and your telephone line.

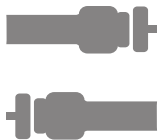


Modem: a device that enables a computer to transmit data over the telephone line, cable or wireless network, and vice-versa.

Cable

- This service is provided over the **cable network** - the same cable network over which TV services are provided.

- This service requires a **cable modem** to be connected to your computer and the cable network.



Wireless

- With this service you can be connected to the Internet **without being physically wired** to a modem and/or telephone line or cable network.



- The following are the main wireless technologies available:

WiFi

With this technology you can access the Internet from different places in your property, without being physically wired to a modem.

You will require either:

- A **wireless router** connected to your broadband modem; or
- A **WiFi modem** connected to your ISP's network.

WiMAX

This technology allows you to take your WiMAX modem from one location to another, within the WiMAX coverage area, without the need of a telephone or cable connection.

You will require both:

- A **WiMAX modem** to be connected to your personal computer or laptop; and
- A **WiMAX antenna** to be installed close to a window or on the rooftop

You can also connect a WiMAX modem to a WiFi modem and combine both technologies in your property.

3G (Third Generation) & 3.5G (HSDPA)

This technology requires either:

- A **3G mobile phone**; or
- A special **PC card** with an in-built antenna or **portable USB modem** that you plug into your computer, laptop, PDA; or
- A laptop or PDA with **in-built access** to the HSDPA network.

Tips to follow when selecting your ISP

■ Find out **what type and amount of data you are likely to download** each month. If you will use the Internet to browse websites and read e-mails only, you will generally require:

- **Download Speed:** maximum 2Mbps; and
- **Download Limit/Usage:** maximum 6GB

Download Limit: The amount of data you can download during a specific period. This is measured in Gigabytes (GB).

If you plan to download or view music, videos and games online, you may need higher download speeds and download limits.

■ Ask your ISP how you can monitor your download limit and what action the service provider will take if you exceed this.

■ With regards to some types of wireless Internet access services (such as WiMAX and HSDPA) the service provider may also restrict the amount of data you are allowed to **upload** during a specific period.

Upload: Transferring data from your PC onto another computer.

This is often called '**data usage**', and should not be confused with 'download limit':

- Download Limit = Restricts downloads
- Data Usage = Restricts downloads + uploads

Data Usage: The amount of data you can download and upload during a specific period. This is measured in Megabytes (MB) or Gigabytes (GB).

■ Some ISPs **offer you a unique e-mail address**. Note that you may not be able to keep this e-mail address should you decide to eventually move to an alternative service provider.

📌 Why are Internet speeds sometimes different from advertised speeds?

The actual speed you receive may sometimes **be slower than advertised because it is affected by the:**

- **Distance** between your property and the nearest exchange or wireless tower;
- **Capacity** of the ISP's network;
- **Number of subscribers** sharing that same network; and
- **Number of users** accessing the Internet or a particular website at the same time.

📌 How can I check what Internet speed I am getting?

You can obtain this information by carrying out a **speed test**. Some service providers make this service available through their websites.

You can also use one of the speed tests offered by a number of independent websites on the Internet.

Alternatively, you can use the **MCA's Internet Health Monitoring System (IHMS)** at www.nethealth.net.mt. This service provides information on the speed of your local connection and is available to all the public.

This site will also provide you with information on the **ISP's performance in terms of network service availability**. This is dependent on the ISP's voluntary participation in the system.

📌 Contact information:

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