

(Approx. 526 words)

Using Wi-Fi on your iPhone and iPad

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February issue, STUGMonitor

www.thestug.org

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Your iPhone is a wonderful device that brings the world into the palm of your hand. It is also capable of using either the cellular phone network OR a Wi-Fi (wireless) network to connect you to everything. In this article we will explain the difference between these connections and why it is so helpful to know how you are connected when using your iPhone or iPad.

The original purpose of the iPhone (or “smart phones”) is to connect to the cellular phone network to make calls. You pay a monthly bill to use this network. But you can use your phone to do so much more; you can run “apps” or applications. Most apps will require downloading data to your phone. If you watch a video, use maps, get directions, download music, etc. you are using data. This data usage is also part of your monthly phone bill and is measured in GB (giga-bytes). You can be billed more than your usual amount if you use too much data. In addition to using the cellular phone network, your iPhone (or smartphone) can also connect to the internet using a Wi-Fi (wireless) network connection. If you have a Wi-Fi connection at your home, you are paying your internet/cable TV provider for this service.

The bottom line for both your iPhone and iPad is to use a Wi-Fi network, not the cellular phone network, whenever you can, to download data or use apps. Here are the basic differences between cellular and Wi-Fi:

Cellular Network – You pay a monthly fee to use this network to make calls and to use data. If you exceed your monthly data allotment, you will be billed more for that extra data usage. The cellular network is available almost everywhere. The strength of your cellular network signal is shown by small bars on your device.

Wi-Fi Network – You pay a monthly fee to your cable TV/Internet provider for your home Wi-Fi wireless internet connection. There is no limit to your usage, and you are not billed a higher amount for using too much. There are many FREE Wi-Fi networks to use – in restaurants, hotels, libraries, businesses, etc. The range of a Wi-Fi network is limited, usually only that specific location. Also, the speed or capacity of a Wi-Fi location can vary greatly from slow to fast. The strength of a Wi-Fi network signal is shown by a small dot with arches, sort of like an eye with eyebrows.

If you open the “Settings” app on your iPhone and look at the “Wi-Fi” bar, you will see either the name of the Wi-Fi network you are connected to, or “Not connected”. Touch this bar to list all the Wi-Fi networks within range and select the network you want. You may have to enter a password to use a network, including your own home Wi-Fi

network. This also applies to your iPad device. It makes good sense to know how you are connected to the internet and to use Wi-Fi whenever you can.