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If you don't have an unlimited data plan on your phone, going over the limit can give you serious sticker shock when the bill arrives. Luckily, you can avoid accidental overuse by just turning off the data on an iPhone or Android smartphone. How to Turn Off Mobile Data on iPhone and Android As you can see in the video above, the steps are simple, but some phones make it even easier with a quick button you can use to turn data on and off. Quick-Access Mobile Data Buttons On an iPhone, this button is on the pull-up menu. The icon looks like a cell phone tower as pictured here: Credit: Clark.com On an Android phone, the button is on the pull-down menu. The icon looks like a down arrow next to an up arrow, pictured here: Credit: Clark.com Once you've turned off your data, you can still use Wi-Fi where it's available. How to Turn Airplane Mode On and Off on iPhone and Android Another way to use less data is to put your phone into Airplane Mode. Activating this function turns off the mobile data and disables your phone's ability to send and receive calls and messages. You can still use Wi-Fi while your phone is in Airplane Mode. Here's how to turn Airplane Mode on and off: With these tools, you can manage your data use to make sure you don't go over your limits to trigger a shocking bill. More Stories From Clark.com You Might Like: When developing Android apps, you can use your knowledge of available networks to improve the user experience. Here's how to acquire the necessary network information. Content and app developers continue to find new ways for users to consume and share content on their devices. This drives higher mobile data usage, which can sometimes cause unexpected costs for consumers. Well-made apps can use the built-in Android capabilities to know when mobile data is available and to help the users manage their data use. Access network information with these permissions In order to access information about available networks, an Android app must declare the ACCESS_NETWORK_STATE permission in the manifest. This isn't typically a problem for Android apps that are monetized with ads; in order to retrieve the ads or any other network data, an app already needs to request the INTERNET permission. At a minimum, apps that use the network and detect available networks will need to request the following permissions: Detect any available network Android devices can detect the available networks, such as Wi-Fi and mobile data, from the carrier. In some instances, you may want to check for any available network. I have one app that uses such a small amount of data that I'm not worried about the amount of data, but I am concerned about the effect on the user experience when the app attempts to access data and times out. The following code uses the ConnectivityManager to check all networks, and returns true if any of them are available. If no network is available, your app may wish to delay or cancel a network operation. import android.net.ConnectivityManager; import android.net.NetworkInfo; public static boolean isAnyNetworkAvailable(final Context context) { boolean status = false; final ConnectivityManager connManager = (ConnectivityManager)context.getSystemService(Context.CONNECTIVITY_SERVICE); if((null != connManager) & (NetworkInfo[] allNetworks = connManager.getAllNetworkInfo()); if((null != allNetworks) & (for(NetworkInfo info: allNetworks) { if (info.getState() == NetworkInfo.State.CONNECTED) { status = true; break; } } }) return status; } Despite the rapid increase in speed for mobile (carrier) networks over the last few years, many users are still charged for the amount of data they use. On the other hand, data use over Wi-Fi networks may be faster and have no such usage charges. For this reason some apps (such as the app for Google Play) can delay high-bandwidth operations like downloading apps until you are connected to a Wi-Fi network, which in many cases will not incur usage charges. You can employ this same technique in your apps. With the above code example, there are a few ways you can get more information about the active network. To determine if the active data network is metered (which is a sign that users may be charged for data use), use ConnectivityManager.isActiveNetworkMetered(). Or, to explicitly determine if the active network is Wi-Fi, use NetworkInfo.getType() to check if the connected network is Wi-Fi; if it is, the enumerated type will be TYPE_WIFI. Since each app may require a different strategy to appropriately query and make use of mobile data networks, dig into ConnectivityManager to see what features you need to use. Be well behaved Mobile devices are increasingly hosting "always-on" apps that send and receive data all the time without this being immediately obvious to users. Well-behaved apps should respect a user's desire to limit or control data use over the mobile (carrier) network, and use knowledge of available networks to improve the user experience. Limited data plans are a mainstay in the US, where several carriers either charge excessive overage fees or throttle your data once you hit your plan's usage limit. People on these plans need to keep careful track of their data usage to ensure they don't go over their allotment. iPhone users don't really have a good way to do this, but the functionality is built into the core Android system. To see how much data you've used, follow these steps. 1. Navigate to the Android settings menu. 2. Tap "Data Usage." 3. Select the dates next to "Data usage cycle," and Change cycle. 4. Change the cycle date to match the start date of your monthly plan. This can be found on either your monthly phone bill or via your carrier's "My Account" section. 5. Check the "Set Mobile Data Limit" box (or Limit mobile data usage on some phones) if you want the phone to block you from using any mobile data after you exceed your limit. Once you've enabled this option, a red bar will appear on the graph. 6. Tap the red bar and hit the up and down arrows to set the limit meter to match your data plan. Once you hit this level, your phone will turn your cellular radio off and you'll be limited to WiFi unless you re-enable your cellular collection. Much of the data on your Android phone or tablet is backed up by Google (or the individual apps you use) automatically, but what is being saved for you, and what do you need to save for yourself? We'll explain exactly what data is backed up automatically and what isn't, so you can rest easy knowing your data is safe—or take steps to back up some application data on your own. What Google Backs Up Automatically Google has a service built into Android, aptly called Android Backup Service. By default, this service backs up most types of data you care about and associates it with the appropriate Google service, where you can also access it on the web. You can see your Sync settings by heading into Settings > Accounts > Google, then selecting your Gmail address. Contacts, Email, Docs, and Calendars: Your Android contacts are synced with your Google contacts online (you can access these contacts from Gmail or on the dedicated Google Contacts page), your email is safely stored in your Gmail account, and calendar events are synced with Google Calendar. Some System Settings: Android also synchronizes some system settings—for example, Android stores saved passphrases for Wi-Fi networks and retrieves them on each Android device you use. It also backs up display settings, like brightness and timeout length. Chrome Browser Data: If you use the Chrome browser, your bookmarks synchronize with your Chrome sync account. Hangouts Chat Logs: Hangouts chat logs are stored in your Gmail account, assuming you haven't disabled chat logging in Gmail. Apps and Other Purchased Content: Any apps you have purchased (or installed) are linked with your Google account. When you set up a new Android device (or enter your account after resetting your Android device to factory default settings), Android will offer to automatically download and install the apps you previously had installed. You can also view apps you have previously installed in the Play Store, so you won't forget which apps you have used (or purchased). Other content you purchase from Google Play is also tied to your Google account. Some Third-Party App Data: Third-party apps often, but not always, sync their data with web services. If you have an app containing data important to you, be sure to check whether it syncs data online before wiping or getting rid of your phone. Smart Lock Password Data: If you use Chrome on your computers and have Smart Lock for Passwords enabled, then your saved passwords will not only sync across Chrome on mobile, but also to some apps. For example, if you have your Netflix password saved in Smart Lock for Passwords, it will automatically be available in the app on your Android devices. Photos: If you use Google Photos, then you could also back your photos up to Google's servers. Unlike most of the others on this list, this feature has to be enabled before it just happens—fortunately, we've got you covered on setting that up, too. There's also a "Photos Backup" entry in the Backup & reset menu on Android Nougat. RELATED: Take Control of Your Smartphone's Automatic Photo Uploads This isn't an exhaustive list, but it should give you some idea of what's backed up automatically. Google includes the most important things, so you don't need to worry about losing your email, contacts, apps, saved Wi-Fi passphrases, or even most passwords. What Google Doesn't Back Up Now that we're covered what Google does automatically back up, let's take a look at what they don't: SMS Messages: Android doesn't back up your text messages by default. If having a copy of your text messages is important to you, follow our guide on backing up text messages to your Gmail account. Google Authenticator Data: For security reasons, Google doesn't synchronize your Google Authenticator codes online. If you wipe your Android device, you'll lose your ability to perform two-factor authentication. You can still authenticate via SMS or a printed authentication code and then set up a new device with new Google Authenticator codes. Custom Settings, Bluetooth Pairings, and Security Data: When you set up a new phone or factory reset yours, you'll have to repair all of your Bluetooth accessories, set up specific settings (like which notifications to block, for example), and re-enter all of your security data, like lock screen passwords and fingerprints. Make sure, before you reset or sell your phone, that you have any of these items backed up manually if you want them. The Gray Area of Backups Like with most things, there is a gray area here: things that can be backed up, but are also contingent on other variables—like developer integration in third-party apps, for example. Game Progress: The Android Backup Service allows developers to back up their data and have it automatically restored in the future. However, you'll find that some games may not take advantage of this feature. This feature is independent for each game, so do your research before you lose everything upon switching devices or performing a factory reset. App Settings: Many other app settings aren't backed up by default. Whether it's preferences in an app you use or alarms you've created in the Clock app, they probably aren't backed up online. Some third-party apps contain backup features that export the app's data to a local file, which you must then keep track of manually (perhaps by uploading it to Google Drive). Again, this is going to be individual for each app. Again, if there's anything important you want to keep in one of your apps, consult the app's settings or documentation to figure out whether it backs up automatically or not. In some cases, you may have options to back up your data manually and bring it to your new device in the form of a file. Full Phone Backups Most people shouldn't have to back up their Android phone or tablet manually—Android's default backup features should be more than good enough. However, some people may want to back up data that Android doesn't back up by default: game saves, app settings, or whatever else. If you want to back up and restore your Android data manually, you have a couple options: Titanium Backup: Titanium Backup is the granddaddy of backup apps. You can use the free version of Titanium Backup, but for everything the app has to offer (and features you'll likely want), you'll have to shell out \$6.00 for the Pro version of the app. It's also not for everyone, as it does require root access. For a closer look at what Titanium Backup can do (and how to use it), head here—note that this post is a little dated looking, but all the functionality is still the same. Android's Hidden Local Backup Feature: Android has a built-in backup and restore feature that doesn't require root, but this feature is hidden. You have to perform a backup or restore by connecting your device to your computer and running a command. In short, Android already backs up the most important things by default, but be sure to enable Photo Uploads so you have a backup copy of your pictures! Advanced users may want to use a local backup tool, but most people shouldn't need to, as it's not that difficult to start from scratch after performing a factory reset. How-To Geek is where you turn when you want experts to explain technology. Since we launched in 2006, our articles have been read more than 1 billion times. Want to know more?

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