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How to manage DATA USAGE while working remotely



The first challenge COVID-19 brought, was to implement Social Distancing via remote working, where possible. While moving people apart was the initial concern, keeping staff virtually connected is the next challenge.

With the added pressure to get this implemented quickly, there was not the luxury of assessing who has what connectivity and how much this is all going to cost, and what the best long-term solution is. Unfortunately, this new way of working is going to come at a personal and financial cost – both of which UCT is trying to manage – as we all adapt to working remotely. UCT is now in the phase of assessing this, but this will also require some creative thinking and changed behaviour in determining which staff members have what type of connectivity, and at what cost, and what their work focus should be in the short term. We are supporting UCT operations in an unusual way, with the added uncertainty of not knowing how long this is going to last, and what the future holds for us all.







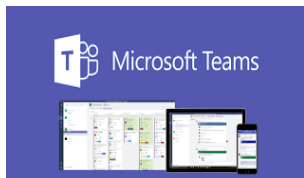

In supporting each other, please be patient, understanding, and mindful that we are all trying our best to manage a lot of new challenges, in what would seem to be unprecedented times for all.

Please read this in conjunction with the **Provision of Data** document to be sent by ICTS, as well as other initiatives ICTS are doing to limit data usage e.g. only essential security updates, and no feature updates.

Here are 10 tips to assist with assessing data usage in your area.

1		A fixed data line/fibre/LTE remains the most stable and cost-effective connectivity option. That said, with so much demand, connectivity and speed may be under pressure. Usage will be reviewed, and where practical, a fixed data line/fibre/LTE may be installed.
2		The data charges via a mobile hot spot is dependent on the data package purchased and can be a very expensive way of working and should thus be used with caution.



3		Windows, and other updates, when connected via VPN, can take a long time, and use a lot of data – if there are updates pending, try and run these at night when data is cheaper. ICTS are working on ways of limiting these.
4		Be flexible around working hours and try to work at night, when data is cheaper, where possible. This may also be advisable now with the extended child-care required. Things may just be quieter at night.
5		Try and be deliberate about logging onto SAP, and only log on via VPN if required, for the period required. This applies especially for the functional users (e.g. purchasers).
6		For occasional SAP users, consider scheduling the required reports via SAP Business Objects, directly to their emails. BOBJ should also be used to ensure fundholders get the required reports while working remotely.
7		Review the workloads in your areas, and if possible, based on connectivity costs being incurred, try and rationalise data intense functions. For example, if there are 3 purchasers/PCard processors, 1 of whom has a fixed data line, try and channel all Purchase Orders (POs)/PCard processing there, and channel other non-data intense functions the other way. This may require additional SAP authorisations, which can be requested via ServiceNow.
8		Where possible, encourage the use of PCards instead of placing a PO on SAP. The electronic submission of PCard supporting documentation is currently being rolled out across campus. The new BOBJ PCard dashboards are in the process of being rolled out too.
9		Connect with your staff via MS Teams and manage the provision of devices and requirements for data usage and top-ups as noted in the ICTS Provision of Data document. This needs to be pro-actively managed and monitored, as the costs can easily escalate if we don't manage behaviour. When video-calling, the video picture is not required, especially if you are in your pyjamas.
10		There are lots of people who have bright ideas for new and improved and smart ways of working remotely. Please share these for the combined benefit as we navigate these uncharted waters together. Please forward any bright ideas to fnd-finance@uct.ac.za and we will keep this list updated.