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What's the best internet connection / data plan for online learning?

Olly - 2020-04-15 - [Online Learning](#)

As much data as you can reasonably afford. There is no easy formula for working out how much you'll need, but hours of video (streaming or conferencing) a day could consume a fair bit, (2-4GB depending on quality), but general web use of Moodle and Office 365 do not use much.

Basically, there are three ways you can connect to the internet from home, with the best listed first:

1. **Fixed Line Broadband** - delivered via a copper telephone or fibre optic cable into your house, mainly in urban areas
2. **Fixed Wireless / Rural Broadband** - a wireless connection to the internet used where there are no physical cables e.g. in rural areas
3. **Mobile Data / Broadband** - access the internet via the mobile phone network

Fixed Line Broadband - gives you the most data for your dosh, and as of March 19th 2020 ***all providers except TrustPower have removed all data caps on all plans to the end of June.*** So it's all you can eat, and in theory* it doesn't slow down. Many providers also throw in special offers on streaming services like Lightbox, NetFlix and Spotify.

Fixed Wireless / Rural Broadband uses the 4G mobile phone network to get to the internet, but it isn't quite the same as directly connecting via the mobile phone network on your phone. Performance is subject to interference and traffic volumes, and isn't really suitable for streaming or game playing.

With the first two options your computer / smart phone connects via a Wi-Fi modem that gets supplied with the plan.

*The number of devices sharing your home/accommodation Wi-Fi network at the same time and what they're doing, e.g. streaming and gaming in particular, **will affect** your internet experience though.

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Mobile Data / Broadband - with these plans from your mobile phone provider, you're normally paying more money for less data than the first two options. However, some providers can be pretty generous with carry over offers and you normally get faster download speeds than wireless broadband. Plus, if you have a computer, you can connect it to your phone and therefore the internet too, by using the **Personal Hotspot** feature, turning your phone into a mobile Wi-Fi modem that's works anywhere!

To work out what providers and plans are best for you, go to <https://www.broadbandcompare.co.nz/>

If cost is a barrier, you may be eligible for special Data Inclusion schemes which support those at risk of not accessing digital technology. This scheme is targeted to groups such as families with children, job seekers, seniors, people with disabilities, refugee / migrant communities and those in social housing. Skinny Jump is an example of this type of scheme and you can find out more details on their [website](#).

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