

Apple's iPad Wi-Fi with 3G: Is anytime access worth it?

May 4 2010, By Edward C. Baig



The Apple iPad.

In the five weeks I've spent with an iPad, little has made me back off my initial impressions: While not for everybody, Apple's freshly conceived tablet is indeed a stunning game-changer. But the Wi-Fi-only iPad model I've been using has at least one big drawback: Wi-Fi still isn't ubiquitous.

Over the weekend, I've been trying out the model that aims to address this void, the [iPad](#) Wi-Fi "plus" [3G](#) that went on sale Friday. Thanks to AT&T's wireless 3G cellular service, I browsed the Web and streamed video sans Wi-Fi in a suburban New Jersey park, sitting in the grandstand at Yankee Stadium and in my car.

The price for this extra wireless freedom is \$629 for a 16-gigabyte model, \$729 for 32GB and \$829 for 64GB. That compares with \$499,

\$599 and \$699 for the Wi-Fi-only versions.

Meanwhile, AT&T charges \$14.99 a month for 250 megabytes of wireless data and \$29.99 for unlimited data. No contract is required, but you do have to tell AT&T if you don't want to continue. The prepay plans automatically renew. It's all easily managed on the iPad itself.

You have flexibility to switch plans on the go. I easily burned past 250MB. The San Francisco Chronicle estimates that 250MB will give you about 35 minutes of YouTube video, or a few thousand Web pages and typical e-mail use.

Is anytime Internet access worth the premium? It boils down to how often you'll be out and about without Wi-Fi access.

Proving as always that cellular service varies by location, I found browsing the Web poky in the upper deck of Yankee Stadium but reasonably fast in the suburban park and in my house.

I had no hiccups streaming the movie "Julie & Julia" through the free Netflix app. Video on Netflix displays in lower resolution when using 3G compared with Wi-Fi, but the difference wasn't stark.

I could not make the same statement concerning videos on YouTube. In 3G, the quality was dramatically inferior (read: lousy). Moreover, ABC's iPad app wouldn't play 3G videos at all. Instead, a warning appears: "Cellular networks are not supported at this time."

[Apple](#) says it made the decision to downgrade resolution on YouTube so you get continuous playback in more places as opposed to stops and starts. ABC made the call to restrict cellular usage through its app.

In most other respects the Wi-Fi and [Wi-Fi](#) "plus" 3G models look and

behave similarly. The 3G machine has a plastic back strip on the top and rear that covers the 3G and GPS antennas.

There's a slot on the side for a micro SIM card. Having GPS means locations through Maps and other apps are more accurate.

I didn't run a scientific test, but based on my usage, expect Apple's claim of some nine hours of battery life to be on the mark, about an hour less than you'll get on the Wi-Fi-only model.

(c) 2010, USA Today.

Distributed by McClatchy-Tribune Information Services.

Citation: Apple's iPad Wi-Fi with 3G: Is anytime access worth it? (2010, May 4) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2010-05-apple-ipad-wi-fi-3g-anytime.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.