

New Snapchat feature could be a godsend for your mobile data plan

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An update to Snapchat set to be released Monday gives users more control over how much mobile data the entertainment app sucks up.

Snapchat can be an expensive habit, at least in terms of how much cellular data it consumes. Opening Snapchat usually starts an automatic download of a library of photos and videos, and top users open the app dozens of times a day while on a cellphone network.

Now, the Los Angeles company is offering a feature called Travel Mode that downloads content only when a user taps on it. Travel Mode can be activated in the settings menu of the updated app.

"I think our users will be happy to see it," Snapchat spokeswoman Shannon Kelly said.

Snapchat has become more data-intensive over the last year as it has begun featuring daily videos of cultural happenings worldwide and content from media outlets such as ESPN and BuzzFeed.

Active users spend 90 minutes on Snapchat each week, up from about an hour a year ago, according to 7Park Data. The amount of content consumed each week has more than tripled to 300 megabytes, the company said.

Tens of millions of users means Snapchat used more [mobile data](#) in March than every app except YouTube and Facebook during peak

periods in North America, the network equipment company Sandvine said. In Great Britain, Snapchat accounts for 75 percent of messaging-related traffic, cellphone service provider Vodafone said in May.

As a result, Snapchat has become a strain on some families' data plans, pushing concerned users to open the app only when on a Wi-Fi connection. As Snapchat's data usage doubled this winter because of new features, users increased the amount of time they spent accessing the [app](#) over Wi-Fi instead, according to data from the tracking firm Mobidia.

Snapchat also introduced a new editing tool Monday, allowing [users](#) to place multiple emoji - the cartoonish digital icons - anywhere on a photo or video message.

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