(Approx. 718 words)

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Traveling With Your Devices (Computers)

By Jim Cerny, Forum Leader, Sarasota Technology Users Group, FL

March 2019 issue, The STUG Monitor

www.thestug.org

jimcerny123 (at) gmail.com

You are probably used to using your computer devices at home, but what about traveling? Taking your devices with you can make your trip much better with directions, shopping, gas, emergency needs, entertainment, and much more. Whether you are traveling with your smart phone, tablet, or laptop here are some important tips to remember.

1. Backup your device and/or data before you leave. If you are using the “cloud” as your backup, that’s fine. But it is wise to check to make sure that you are putting all your important things on the cloud or whatever backup system you use.

2. Bring charging cables and power backups with you, along with ear buds for private listening. You should have a cable in your car as well to keep your devices charged.

3. Check that your destinations have free Wi-Fi. Even if they do, be prepared for much slower response than what you get at home.

4. Take your needed account IDs and passwords with you! If you use another computer or need to access your email in a different way, you will need your IDs and passwords. At home you may have your device remember your ID or password, but when you travel it may not work that way, especially if something goes wrong.

5. Keep your travel information handy – in your smart phone for example. Have an “emergency” note in memory with your medications, doctor information, emergency contacts, etc. You should also have a list of your destination phone numbers, travel club memberships and phone numbers for general travel needs such as hotel chains, airlines, car rental companies, etc.

6. Do a test before you leave on your trip. Go to your local library or coffee shop and test how to get your email or important things on the internet. It is nice to see how things work differently when you are not in a hurry and when you are NOT using your home Wi-Fi network.

7. If there is no Wi-Fi network, you may be able to use your iPhone/smart phone as a “hotspot,” so your laptop can connect to the internet using your phone as a Wi-Fi. Note that you will be using the cellular network and such use may use your data and/or add to your monthly phone bill (depending upon your phone contract). You can ask Google how this is done on your particular smart phone and/or contact your cellular provider for help and possible use charges that may be billed to you. Again, do a test of this before you leave.

8. Be aware that using a “public” Wi-Fi network is, well, not private. In other words, others using the same network may be able to see what you are doing. Try to avoid entering passwords, account numbers, and credit card numbers on public networks.

9. Test how you will use Google maps (or other travel apps) before you leave on your trip. Try them around town in your local area when you are not in a hurry to see how they would work, especially if you will be using them in your car. Can you drive using the audio voice directions? Do you need to touch the screen on your device while driving? Do you understand how your travel app displays bad traffic, accidents, gas stations, hotels, etc.? It is ALWAYS better to have a passenger help you navigate with your device while driving. Any distraction taking your eyes off the road is dangerous. If you are driving by yourself pull off the road and stop to use or adjust your device.

10. If you are traveling out of the USA, you will have to get adaptors and arrange for special usage for your devices in other countries. Ask Google or your provider for help and costs.

In summary, it all comes down to being prepared and to “know before you go.” Besides, it can be fun to discover some of those wonderful things those apps can do before you are in a bind with problems on the road. Happy safe travels.

The following .jpg image is optional, but I think it’s fun:

