Mobile hotspot devices or mobile tethering is**the ability of a mobile device to function as a wireless network.** It broadcasts a Wi-Fi signal other devices can connect to. Each device that links to a hotspot believes it is in a Wi-Fi network. In reality, it is using cellular data from a mobile broadband service provider.

A Mobile Hotspot Provides Wi-Fi access almost anywhere**, although you must have a cellular signal to provide Wi-Fi capabilities**.

\*\*\*\*\* There is an ongoing argument nationwide about CIPA compliance and hotspots, which the FCC has yet to make an official ruling. Please contact Technology Services staff to discuss prior to purchasing any hotspots.

**Pros of Mobile Hotspots:**

* Do not Need to Spend a Lot of Money on Data

With a mobile hotspot, you may choose not to subscribe to a data plan for other devices.

* Can Connect Multiple Devices

The device can be a personal hotspot and share the Wi-Fi signal not only to your devices but also to other people as well.

* A Mobile Hotspot Is Not Limited to Smartphones

Cellular vendors provide devices specific for hotspot Wi-Fi capabilities that have no phone capabilities.

Any device with tethering capabilities, has a data plan and can connect to the Internet, can be a mobile hotspot. In some cases, the wireless network can be shared via Bluetooth.

* It is Easy to Use

The exact procedure can vary but instructions are generally easy to follow.

* Most hotspot devices are mobile and can be used in multiple location and while traveling given cellular coverage.

**Cons of Mobile Hotspots:**

* While Wi-Fi hotspots have come a long way since Mi-Fi devices they still can range in expense. If a vendor does not offer an unlimited data plan, there could be a subscription with a cap and over usage can be very expensive.
* The Wi-Fi hotspot Is Not as Fast

Today, there are many options for mobile connectivity speeds.  Area with an unreliable Internet coverage or provides slower access speeds (ex. 3G) can render the device useless depending on what it is being used for.

* Internet speed may slow down as more devices use the same hotspot
* Hotspot devices can have a short battery life

Plan on having the device plugged in or have a power bank ready for extended use.

* It May Not Be Safe

Your network can be vulnerable to different security risks such as malware, ransomware, and even identity theft. The provider must use security features like encryption so scammers and hackers cannot intercept the data.

* May Not Have Coverage

Depending on the vendor, a hot spot may not provide service depending on location and travel.