

WE ARE ALL CONNECTED!



Happy 2015 to all! This year as we embark on new resolutions as well as try to improve on last year's, we realized that we've been writing this column for 4 years. Since then we have seen numerous technological changes as well as a radical shift in consumer tech needs...both of which occur at warp speed. Today we see everyone with one type of mobile device or another, which means everyone needs to have either a 3G/4G, Wifi or landline connection, which in turn means that locations with a poor infrastructure cannot provide satisfactory coverage for everyone.

As we already know, Telefonica (Movistar) has had the monopoly in Spain for years; competitors such as Orange, Jazztel, Vodafone and more – including private providers - have all jumped on the bandwagon of providing internet service at a variety of rates and packages, resulting in a very confused and oftentimes a cheated consumer. So, some basic rules to keep in mind when getting connected:

Rule Nº 1 – Nothing is the same in Spain as in your home country; do **not** expect connections with lightning speed (although fiber optics is due here later in 2015),

nor the ability to change providers whenever you want, at a moment's notice, without paying a hefty penalty.

Rule Nº 2 –English is rarely spoken by local vendors. If you aren't fluent in Spanish, take someone with you who does to ensure you understand the fine print on contracts.

Rule Nº 3 – Ask key questions about “permanencia” (required contract duration), “cobertura” (coverage), “tarifas” (rates for local, international calls and broadband connection), and “domiciliación” (direct debit).

Rule Nº 4 – Geography matters. Just because one side of the street gets 10MB is no guarantee the other side will get it too. Many vendors just promise you the service without ascertaining the coverage first!

Rule Nº 5 – Internet/phone provider offices are handled by agents of the parent company whose primary purpose is **to sell**, not provide full service. So if you have a connection problem, don't expect much support help from them.

Rule Nº 6 – Get the connection you **need**, not what people want to sell you. Whether you want a 2-week-long connection or a permanent one, you should be able to get either one without paying penalty fees or high installation charges.

The advent of faster and more efficient connectivity for everyone has quickly raised the internet-awareness of most people, even though they may never have used a computer in their lives. Affordable Smartphones, tablets and e-book readers have facilitated this flurry of growth in the mobile device industry, and as a result, internet service providers are battling for your business. So make sure you get the **best** and **most reliable** service possible, the **best coverage** with the **most flexibility**, and even though you might pay a wee bit more, get the **RIGHT** connection: 3G/4G or landline - for **YOUR needs**.

Have an Enlightening New Year!