WFH | A UITS expert shares ways you can maximize your at-home tech

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After spending another day waiting for websites to load and looking at pixelated faces during Zoom meetings, you yell for help. Your cat, hearing the noise, enters the room and gives you a look of disdain, but doesn't offer much in the way of technical expertise.

Fortunately, **University Information Technology Services** [1] has you covered. **Clancey Dollard**, assistant director of IT support, spoke with Lo Que Pasa about how to maximize your technology in the work-from-home environment.

With people relying on their home networks rather than the super-fast University network, how can they boost their internet speed?

One's home internet connection is more important than ever with so many relying on it for work. Each situation is different and there are many variables, so there is no catchall for increasing internet speeds (except paying your provider more money for increased bandwidth). That said, there are some things that can be done to optimize the performance of both your network and your devices, including but not limited to:

- Ensuring that your modem, router or modem/router combo devices are located in an optimal area to provide the best Wi-Fi coverage (obstructions and lack of direct line of sight weaken the signal from your router).
- Where possible, plug your device directly into the router rather than having to rely on the Wi-Fi signal.
- Oftentimes there are programs that run automatic updates in the background while your computer is in use. This can significantly slow things down. Try scheduling or running manual updates on these programs during times when you are not actively using your computer.
- Check your Task Manager (for PCs) or Activity Monitor (for Macs) and identify any programs that might be running in the background.
- Ensure the device is protected with reliable anti-virus software. The University provides **different versions of Sophos** [2] free of charge for students, faculty and staff. Oftentimes internet service providers offer free anti-virus protection with their service. No matter what option you go with, find an anti-virus you're comfortable with and run virus and malware scans frequently to ensure that your devices are clear of any infections.
- For those in rural areas or areas with slower internet speeds, your cellphone signal may be able to provide a mobile hot spot.

Is there any affordable equipment or software that you would suggest looking into that can help?

Affordable is relative, but if your modem and/or router is more than 3 years old, consider investing $50-$100 in a new one. Technology is moving at such a fast pace that older equipment becomes less effective more quickly than ever. Another item you can acquire to potentially boost Wi-Fi coverage in your home is a Wi-Fi signal booster, which amplifies the existing signal or extends the range of the signal. Entry-level boosters start as low as $15. With so many bells and whistles, however, top-of-the-line extenders can reach $150-$200.

*(The **UITS 24/7 Support Team** [3] is available to talk about optimizing home office setups. The Office of Student Computing Resources is also offering its **Gear2Go service** [4] – allowing students, faculty and staff to borrow equipment including digital cameras, audio recorders, microphones and more – by appointment or through the mail.)*

What can employees do to make sure their laptops and other devices stay secure while working from home?

My suggestions are:

- Use a reputable anti-virus and malware protection application.
- Access campus applications and data by first logging in to the **University VPN** [5].
- Be aware of and cautious of phishing attacks. Be especially cautious of clicking on links in emails that are flagged as external.

Employees are using Zoom more than ever for meetings. Do you have any tips on how to optimize Zoom, especially if you live in an area with slower speeds?

If you struggle with slow internet speeds and notice latency, freezing or slowness during Zoom meetings, you can try a few things:

- Turn off your camera.
- Log into the meeting with your camera only (turn off sound from your computer) and log in for sound by dialing in with your phone.
- Close other applications running in the background and run only Zoom during the meeting.

(More information on changing settings and addressing latency issues is available on Zoom's **support** *[6] and* **troubleshooting** *[7] pages.)*

What can employees do if they have tech issues? Is University tech support still available?

Absolutely! The University's **Information Technology page** [8] is a great resource. If you run into an issue to which you can't find the answer, eager tech specialists are standing by via phone, chat and mail at the 24/7 Support Center. Simply call 520-626-TECH (8324) or visit **247.arizona.edu** [9] to initiate a chat or submit a ticket. Please note that support is intended for personal devices and centralized services and Applications, such as Gmail or NetID+. For help with University-owned devices, use your unit's internal IT resources.

Source URL:https://uaatwork.arizona.edu/lqp/wfh-uits-expert-shares-ways-you-can-maximize-your-home-tech

Links
[1] http://uits.arizona.edu/ [2] https://softwarelicense.arizona.edu/sophos-central [3] https://it.arizona.edu/service/247-it-support [4] https://it.arizona.edu/service/gear-go [5] https://it.arizona.edu/documentation/ua-vpn-download-and-installation-instructions-windows [6] https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/203024649-Video-Or-Microphone-Off-By-Attendee [7] https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/sections/200305593-Troubleshooting [8] https://it.arizona.edu/ [9] http://247.arizona.edu/