

STAYING CONNECTED

Chapter
7

The World Economic Forum ranked Singapore 1st in Asia and 5th globally in their Global Information Technology Report 2007-2008 report. This is testament to the efforts that Singapore has put in to develop an advanced and reliable Information Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure that has met the needs and demands of our vibrant economy and society. The latest study on broadband usage in Singapore reveals a household broadband penetration of 79.2%, while Internet penetration amongst households is at 71% of the population.

Rank	Country	Network Readiness Index
1	Denmark	5.78
2	Sweden	5.72
3	Switzerland	5.53
4	United States	5.49
5	Singapore	5.49

Source: Global Information Technology Report 2007-2008, World Economic Forum

Telecommunications Services

There are 3 major service providers of telecommunication services in Singapore:

- SingTel <http://www.singtel.com>
- MobileOne <http://www.m1.com.sg>
- Starhub <http://www.starhub.com>

Each of these operators offers a wide range of communication services at competitive rates, including:

- Mobile communications services, including cellular and paging services. Mobile phone operators in Singapore operate networks such as GSM900, GSM1800, W-CDMA
- International telephone services, including IDD services, calling cards, facsimile services
- Prepaid mobile communication services ("pay as you use")
- Public phones
- Internet access services

For more details of the service plans, please refer to the websites of the respective service providers.

Fixed line subscription

The fixed line household penetration rate in Singapore is at 95% - most apartments should already come with a fixed phone line. SingTel provides most of the analog fixed line connections in Singapore, and residential subscription of S\$107 per annum (with a one-time activation charge of S\$53.50). Usage rates start from S\$0.75 for 60-seconds block during non-peak hours to 30-seconds block during peak hours.

Starhub has introduced digital voice subscriptions with a monthly subscription of S\$10.49 that offers unlimited local incoming and outgoing calls all day.

Mobile phones

Mobile phones are the most common means of communication in Singapore, where the mobile penetration rate is more than 130%. All the 3 telecommunication service providers offer monthly price plans with different promotional rates and bundled services. The plans could range from S\$19.95 – S\$200 per month (excluding installation, hardware and other optional services).

⁶ Statistics on Telecom Services for February 2008, <http://www.ida.gov.sg>

⁷ IDA's Annual Survey on Infocomm Usage in Households and by Individuals 2006, <http://www.ida.gov.sg>

Alternatively, you may choose to purchase pre-paid cards from the service providers. These are stored-value cards which you may use till the value is depleted. These cards are available at all telecommunication shops. You may top-up the value of these cards at ATMs, Self-service Automated Machines (S.A.M), or purchase top-up cards at convenience shops such as 7-Eleven and Cheers, which are opened 24 hours daily. Most pre-paid cards are also bundled with free IDD calls to specific countries, plus auto-roaming services.

Public payphones

Public payphones are located at most shopping malls and public places, and operate by credit card or stored-value phonecards. Local calls from public payphones cost 10 cents per three-minute block. Besides local calls, all cardphones provide International Direct Calling services and subscriber Trunk Dialling for Malaysian calls. Stored-value phonecards are found in denominations of S\$2, S\$5 S\$10, S\$20 and S\$50 and can be purchased from post offices and phonecard agents. International Calling Cards are also available at all post offices, 7-Eleven stores and other retail outlets.

International calling services

The 3 service providers in Singapore offer a wide range of international calling services for consumers to choose from depending on your needs and budget:

- SingTel : IDD 001; BudgetCall 013; STD 020; V019
- MobileOne : Premier IDD 002; IDD 021
- StarHub : IDD 008; IDD018

Alternatively, stored-value card phones or international calling cards can be purchased from post offices and phonecard agents to make international calls through all phones. The international calling cards are also available at all 7-Eleven stores and other retail outlets. For more details of the service and rates to different destinations, please refer to the websites of the respective service providers.

Wireless Networks

Singapore's household broadband penetration is approximately 75% (99% of the island is broadband enabled). As part of long-term plans to turn Singapore into an "intelligent island", Singapore has launched an extensive wireless@SG programme island-wide where users can enjoy free indoor and outdoor seamless wireless broadband access at many public places. These areas include high traffic areas in the Central Business District, shopping areas in the Orchard Road and HDB Town Centres. Some cafes and fast food outlets also provide consumer free wireless broadband access too. Users simply need to register an account with one of the 3 providers (iCell, QMax, SingTel). For details, please refer to this website: www.ida.gov.sg.

For home use, you can sign up for with the following operators which offer wide range of plans at a reasonable and affordable fee. Broadband plans from these companies range from \$19.95 - \$208 per month:

- SingNet BroadBand <http://www.singnet.com.sg>
- StarHub MaxOnline <http://maxonline.starhub.com>
- MobileOne <http://M1.com.sg>
- PacNet <http://www.pacific.net.sg>
- QMax Communications <http://www.gmax.com.sg>