GPRS

General Packet Radio Service (GPRS) is a wireless technology that allows the smartphone user to quickly **connect** to the Internet and obtain good data rates. Connection time is fast since GPRS does not require any dialing (unlike CSD), and the smartphone feels as if it is always connected.

GPRS runs on top of the GSM protocol. While GSM alone is circuitswitched, GPRS is based on **packet-switching** technology. This means that the radio bandwidth is used only when data is actually transferred, even though you are constantly connected (circuit-switching keeps the full bandwidth reserved throughout a connection).

In theory, GPRS supports **bandwidths** up to **170** Kbps. In practice, however, you'll get between 20 and 60 Kbps depending on network conditions – but this is still significantly faster than the GSM dialup data rate! The best way to think of the speed of GPRS is that it matches approximately with a PC connected to the network via a wired telephone modem. However, GPRS can feel better than dialup since it connects almost instantly to the network without the lengthy delay involved in dialing a number and establishing a call.

GPRS is a highly usable communication feature and a good preview of future wireless data communication technologies. Since it is a stepping stone to 3G technology, it is categorized as 2.5G technology. GPRS is available on most smartphones.

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