

hokkaido *Life*

GETTING ONLINE & LANDLINE

The links in these documents contain information to make your life in Hokkaido easier and more enjoyable. Access each link and add it to your favourites list.

Connecting From Home

If you want to check e-mail and use the Internet from home, there are two basic things that you'll need to get online:

- A reasonably up to date computer with a Local Area Network (LAN) card or 56K modem and a CD drive (to install software if need be). If you computer doesn't have a Local Area Network (LAN) card, you can get one here via a USB adaptor.
- A phone line installed in your apartment/house. It should be in your name or your BOE/Contractor's name.

Services can be paid by credit card, auto bank withdraw or convenience store via an invoice. Bank withdraw will require an *inkan* (registered seal).

Getting a Phone Line

There are a few cable internet services, but don't count on it. It's best to use a phone line. However, this doesn't mean you will have to settle for 56k speeds by any means. If you are fortunate enough to have a phone line already installed for you by your contracting organization, then you're ready to move to the next step. If you are unfortunate, then please read on...

For prices on a new install - [http://www.ntt-east.co.jp/product_e/01/index.html]. Your best bet is to either talk to your supervisor about your phone situation or dial NTT on 0120-364-463 as they can help set you up with the services that best suit you.

Keep in mind that local domestic calls are NOT free in Japan. The cost for local calls can vary by company, but average around 10円 for every minute.

One way around this is to use NTT's handy *tele-hōdai* service. For roughly 1,800円 a month, you can call up to two local registered numbers as much as you like between 11pm and 8am. For more information on this, as above, ask your supervisor, ring NTT, or check out some of the options below.

BROADBAND IN HOKKAIDO

While '*always on*' ADSL services and ultra-high fast fiber optic cable are available in most areas, they haven't made it to every nook and cranny just quite yet. However, you may be surprised. Not only do broadband connections allow for blazing speed (up to several hundred times faster than normal dial-ups), but also, *unlike* normal dial-up service, you only pay a flat monthly fee and don't need to worry about how much time you spend online.

In addition to your computer, you'll need the following:

- A Local Area Network (LAN) card in order to connect an ADSL modem.
- Recent version (i.e. the last 3 years) Windows XP/Vista or Mac OSX is recommended.
- Gaijin Card & Passport (A Credit Card too if you want to pay that way.)

Fiber Optic - *a.k.a. B Flet's and Flet's Hikari*

For the ultimate in high-speed online access, with download speeds of up to 100Mbps (about the equivalent of most US universities) in the comfort of your own home, fiber optic is the way to go. On the other hand, between the service fee from NTT and the cost of your ISP, your fiber optic access can run upwards of 6,000円 a month. If you live in an apartment, then the cost can be less to get it.

Head to [<http://bbapply.com/>] to help setup your service. It's in English and recommended; they'll walk you through everything. I got NTT Flet's Hikari and it's amazing.

ADSL - *a.k.a. Flet's ADSL*

Asynchronous Digital Subscriber Line, or simply ADSL, is gaining ground throughout Hokkaido. ADSL works by splitting your phone line into two separate channels – one for voice traffic and the other for data. Remember, that even if you have a phone line, ADSL might not be available in your area. You must be within 3 kilometers of an NTT switching office. Otherwise, you'd have so much signal loss that it would negate

any increase in speed over a regular dial-up modem. [\[http://bbapply.com/\]](http://bbapply.com/) can help you with this too.

To find out if you live close enough to one of these switching offices, you can go about it by either asking a Japanese friend to find out for you (the cheap & easy way) or go to [\[http://www.ntt-east.co.jp/product_e/05/2.html\]](http://www.ntt-east.co.jp/product_e/05/2.html) and find out for yourself. If you do decide to find out for yourself, follow these instructions to get what you need:

- Go to [\[http://www.ntt-east.co.jp/line-info\]](http://www.ntt-east.co.jp/line-info).
- Click the link in the middle of the page that says [電話回線].
- Scroll down to the bottom on the page and click the *NEXT* button.
- Click the [ログオン] button (the only one on this screen)
- On the left of the screen, you should see a text entry box that says [電話番号]. Enter your telephone number, area code included (i.e. 0126-XX-XXXX).
- Near the bottom left of the screen should be 3 buttons. Click on the one that says [実行].
- Once you press this button, 3 numbers will pop up on the right side of the screen. The number in the middle is how many meters your phone is from the closest NTT switching office. If this number is less than 3000, you can sign up for ADSL. If not, you might have to get dial-up.

The next step is to actually get your phone line set up for ADSL, and this needs to be done through NTT (see number above). Your best bet is to have your supervisor or a Japanese-speaking friend to help you out as it can involve quite a bit of paperwork.

NTT will also, for a very small monthly fee, provide you with an ADSL modem so you won't have to shell out a ton of cash up front. Monthly service should run you around 2,200円 to 5,500円, but keep in mind that this is *only* for the NTT connection fee. The ISP may cost about 800円 a month more. Check out [\[http://www.ntt-east.co.jp/product_e/05/2.html\]](http://www.ntt-east.co.jp/product_e/05/2.html) again for more details.

Service Providers

ADSL in Hokkaido (and much of Japan) pretty much comes in 3 flavors – 1.5Mbps to 50Mbps. It's best to go with the fastest one available in your area as the cost isn't really that much between services.

OCN, Yahoo BB, ODN and **Plala** seem to have the widest service areas. There are, of course, many other local ADSL ISPs as well, so ask around for the best deals. The *Useful Resources* section below lists some of these local ISPs. Check out ads in the paper at school or visit the local computer store for other information. Many of these

ISPs will give you the first few months for free.

Ask yourself these questions when choosing a broadband ISP; 'Can you handle not having English support?', 'What types of extra services do they offer?', etc.. If you give them your phone number, they can help you out and tell you on the spot whether or not they offer service in your area.

Final Note

As with buying anything else, it's always best to shop around and see what best suits your needs. Ask around to see what everyone else is using to get an idea of what's available in your area.

As always, the official [hajat|forum](#) is where you will find all the answers to any questions you may have regarding life in Hokkaido.

HAJET kindly asks you to use paper wisely and only print this document if you really, really must. LOVE HOKKAIDO, LOVE THE ENVIRONMENT!

USEFUL RESOURCES

HAJET Forum	www.hokkaidojets.org
JNTO	www.jnto.go.jp
Japan Visitor	www.japanvisitor.com
OCN	www.ocn.ne.jp/english/
Asahi Net	www.asahi-net.or.jp/en/index.html
3Web	http://home.threeweb.ad.jp/
SpinNet	www.spinnet.jp/indexe.html
InfoSnow	www.infosnow.ne.jp/
Marimo Internet	http://www1.marimo.or.jp/
PLALA	www.plala.or.jp/
Yahoo BB	https://ybb.softbank.jp/
ODN	www.odn.ne.jp

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