

Traveling with Electronic Devices

Or “What happened to the days
when you just turned on the TV in
your hotel room?”

Setting up devices in hotel room

- Phones, tablets and computers are pretty straightforward – just follow instructions
- Streaming devices such as Roku and Fire TV sticks and Amazon Echo are more involved
- Physically connecting devices to a TV can be quite challenging – the hotel usually does nothing to make it easy for you

What might you need with you?

- Of course, your device and it's associated remote and power supply
- 12 foot extension cord and maybe a power strip
- 10-12 foot HDMI cable
- HDMI gender changer
- Flashlight
- Universal TV remote
- HDMI video adapters or converters
- Smart phone or tablet
- Small mirror
- A book to read

Connecting to the TV set

- Often the TV's are fastened down and the connection area is hard to reach – use flashlight, mirror
- Find a suitable input that's not in use or unplug something (but put it back when done)
- Often, the remote control for the TV will not be able to change the inputs on the TV – look for small buttons on the edge of the TV set
- If no other way, try programming your universal remote for the TV to switch inputs

Special problems

- Site Internet may detect and block video streaming – try connecting your computer if it has an HDMI output and run video on computer
- TV may be programmed to prevent changing of inputs – unplug something
- Inputs may have a physical cover – but sometimes older inputs are not blocked – use HDMI adapters
- If physical access is impossible, use book

Tips

- Carry extra batteries for remotes
- Protect remotes in packing so a button is not accidentally pressed continuously
- Sometimes lamp outlets in a room can be used but watch for switches that control the lamp
- Use extension cord if outlets behind TV are inaccessible
- Short HDMI cables help when there is no room to plug in Roku or Fire TV sticks directly into the TV

Tips (cont.)

- At home you may use a phone or tablet as an alternative for a device remote but that requires both to be on the same network. Many hotels use router options that prevent communication between devices in order to protect privacy so you usually will have to use the remote that came with your device.

Amazon Echo

- If you have more than one Echo device, installing one at another location works fine and it's considered to be part of your group and works just as if you were home with it
- You must use the Alexa app on your phone or tablet to get the Internet connection set up
- You can use the Alexa app to specify a different location and time zone from home for an individual Echo and it will then answer correctly for its assigned location
- Playing music, dropping in, announcements, phone calls, etc. work as if you were home

Roku vs. Fire TV sticks

- Both come in various versions with similar capabilities: all support hi-definition -- some also include support for 4K and HDR color
- Both use apps for the various services; however, the apps for the same services may appear/operate somewhat differently on the different devices
- Various apps present different keyboards which is confusing
- Some services on Fire TV require subscriptions purchased through Amazon but most do not
- Connecting Fire TV to hotel Internet is a bit less complicated than for Roku

Watching your stuff when you are in another country

- Many services (Netflix, Hulu, Acorn, etc.) impose limits on what you can watch depending on where you are and may require you to have an account in whatever country you are in: Netflix is especially pesky
- unlocator.com is a Danish-based company that has a solution to this for \$4.95/month but it does get somewhat technical and will not work for everything in all places
- Fire TV is better than Roku for this purpose since you must change DNS entries to make this work and you can't do that on a Roku. Using this service with Roku requires access to the router: you must have access or take something like a travel router with you.

Links to converters/adapters

- HDMI to AV converter:
https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B01L8P11LC/ref=ppx_yo_dt_b_search_asin_title?ie=UTF8&psc=1
- HDMI to component converter:
https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B01DE66ZNW/ref=ppx_yo_dt_b_search_asin_title?ie=UTF8&psc=1
- HDMI f-f adapter:
https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00V7SFR8Y/ref=ppx_yo_dt_b_search_asin_title?ie=UTF8&psc=1
- HDMI switch:
https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00LFX1UDM/ref=ppx_yo_dt_b_search_asin_title?ie=UTF8&psc=1