

# Four tips for making calls with apps

THE STAR 13/3/17 M/S 4  
MORE and more messenger apps are also offering calls in addition to voice messages, photos, emoji, videos or data.

*WhatsApp*, *Signal*, *Wire*, *Facebook Messenger* and *Skype* all promise a cheaper, easier alternative to traditional phone calls. But what does anyone who wants to switch have to keep in mind?

## Free calls

By phoning through apps via VoIP (voice over IP), you don't have to pay exorbitant charges for international calls or calls to other mobile networks. But it won't be entirely free either.

Users pay with their monthly data volume and those who prefer to make calls through an app should make sure they have enough. One gigabyte per month should be the minimum, advises the German IT magazine *c't*.

## Data usage

Making calls using apps such as

*Skype*, *WhatsApp*, *Signal* or *Wire* will make a dent in your monthly data.

They use up between 20MB and 40MB every hour according to a recent test of eight different apps, while maintaining communication with the servers requires around 1MB per month.

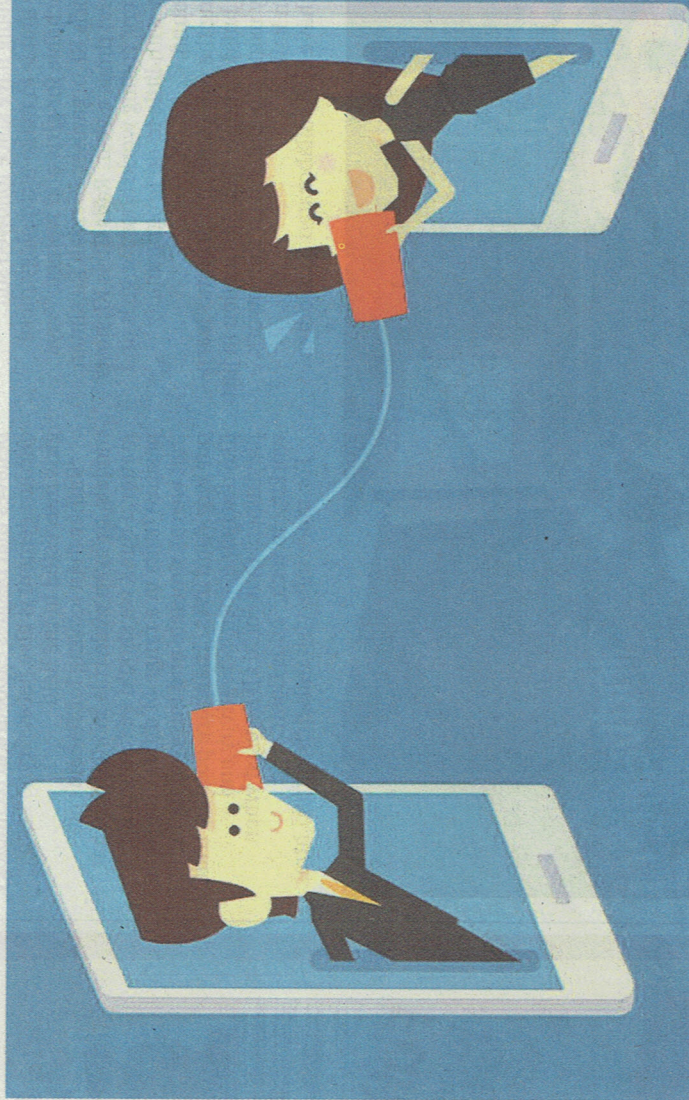
If you don't want to waste your precious data, you may want to consider using these apps only when connected to a WiFi network.

## Network availability

While regular mobile calls will work well in areas where UMTS or LTE networks are not available, this is where apps begin to show weaknesses.

The transmission time of the individual data packages can be so slow that the two people talking may start interrupting each other due to the long pauses.

According to *c't*, the connection can also be cut off when switching from one cell tower to another.



If you have a good data plan, you can use messenger apps like *WhatsApp* to make international calls so you don't get charged anything. — 123rf.com

## Finding friends

While it is possible to make regular calls to and from any kind of mobile phones, the apps have more restrictions.

Apple's Facetime only connects

with Apple devices.

Meanwhile *Wire*, *Signal*, *WhatsApp* and similar apps only work within the same service, but at least you're not limited to devices made by the same manufacturers.

Since the individual apps don't eat up a lot of memory, you may want to keep a few of them on your phone.

This should make it easier to get in touch with a wider selection of contacts. — dpa