



Save on home technology with these simple techniques

For the AJC
Sunday, May 31, 2009
Personal Finance

The recession has personally touched most Americans in one way or another. According to the Pew Research Center's Social and Demographic Trends survey, eight in 10 adults have taken specific steps to economize during these bad times. However, in our fast-paced society, technology has become essential to how we live, work and play. With a little planning you can enjoy your favorite gadgets and technology while still cutting down on your family's monthly expenses.

1. Bundle services

Tired of three monthly bills for Internet, phone and cable service? By bundling your services, you could save \$20 or more per month. Check with your current service provider as well as other local providers for the best deal and make sure to comparison shop.

2. Cut the cord!

Use your cellphone for all of your calls, and cancel your traditional phone service. Remember, the typical local phone bill is between \$30 and \$50 each month. That could be \$360 or \$600 back in your pocket annually if you make the jump. However, more than 70 percent of consumers experience indoor cellphone signal service problems so making an investment in a cellphone signal booster, like the industry leading zBoost ([www .wi-ex.com](http://www.wi-ex.com)), can help make cutting the cord a smooth transition.

3. Go fluorescent

Did you know that fluorescent light bulbs use 75 percent less energy than standard light bulbs and can last about 10 times as long? An Energy Star qualified compact fluorescent light bulb, or CFL, will save about \$30 over its lifetime and pay for itself in about six months.

4. Check appliances

Although new energy-efficient appliances are an initial investment, when you compare the power usage of your old washer and dryer with your new energy-efficient one, it is easy to see the long-term savings and how they far outweigh the short-term expense.

The average home spends about \$2,000 on energy bills every year, and by changing to appliances that have earned the Energy Star, and you can save \$75 a year in energy costs, while saving the environment.

5. Get unplugged

Did you know that your TV, computer, cable or satellite receiver and other electronics still use power even when they are turned off? Unplug them, and you will save. U.S. households spend \$100 per year to power devices while they are in this “standby” power mode. The following are the worst offenders:

- > Televisions
- > Game consoles (Wii, PS3, Xbox 360 etc.)
- > DSL or cable modems
- > Computers (laptop or PC)
- > Printers
- > Microwave ovens
- > Sound systems
- > Cable or satellite receivers
- > DVD players
- > VCRs

The screenshot shows the AJC website interface. At the top, there is a weather widget showing 80°F, pollen count, and traffic. Navigation links include Home, News, Sports, Entertainment, Travel, Business, Lifestyle, Obituaries, Homes, Jobs, Cars, and Classifieds. A search bar is located in the top right corner.

The main content area features a banner for MARTA (Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority) with the headline "Proposed Changes in MARTA service, fees, and parking" and a link to "Click here for more information".

Below the banner, the article "Save on home technology with these simple techniques" is displayed. The article is dated Sunday, May 31, 2009, and is categorized under Personal Finance. The text discusses the recession's impact on Americans and offers three techniques to save on home technology expenses:

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On the right side of the page, there is a "Sign up for Breaking News Alerts" section with a "Sign Up" button. Below that is a "SUTHERLIN MALL OF GEORGIA" advertisement for a 2009 Nissan Altima, starting at \$15,900, with a "CLICK HERE to view our inventory" link.

At the bottom, there is a "Search" section with tabs for HOMES, JOBS, CARS, and CLASSIFIEDS. The "HOMES" tab is selected, showing "Find Atlanta homes for sale" and a search bar for "Select neighborhood".