



GLOBAL BENEFITS

INTERNATIONAL INSURANCE FOR EXPATS,
TRAVELERS & ORGANIZATIONS

10 WAYS TO AVOID TECH TRAGEDIES ABROAD

Traveling abroad is no simple feat. No matter how much planning we put into our foreign travels, we often encounter at least a minor disaster. From lost luggage to missed flights, international travel can go awry in the blink of an eye. Traveling today means relying on technology. Traveling with more and more tech devices however, has created a host of new challenges for globetrotters, from protecting your personal information to simply keeping everything up and running.

But good news: Tech tragedies are usually preventable.

Here are ten seemingly catastrophic tech tragedies, and how travelers can solve them and still enjoy their trip.

Tech Tragedy No. 1: Stolen credit card information

Solution: Utilize RFID-blocking products

You might think of a traditional pickpocket as someone who bumps into you and steals your wallet, but that's not so in today's modern world. Today's pickpockets are much more tech-savvy. They can quickly download your personal data from your credit card using handheld RFID scanning devices. Many credit cards issued recently are embedded with chips that store all of your personal data. No need to worry, however. There are plenty of RFID-blocking wallets, bags, cardholders and other accessories (<https://www.smartertravel.com/rfid-blocking-travel-gear/>) designed to protect your cards from digital thieves.

Tech Tragedy No. 2: Communicating without a phone plan**Solution:** GoTenna Mesh

One of the most difficult parts of international travel is figuring out a communication system. International phone and data plans can be incredibly pricey, and they're not always guaranteed to capture a signal. The [goTenna Mesh](https://www.gotenna.com/pages/mesh) (<https://www.gotenna.com/pages/mesh>) easily pairs to your phone and generates its own radio signal, so you can send texts and GPS locations using an app— without requiring towers, routers or satellites. I've used goTenna Mesh on a few excursions abroad when traveling in groups. It's been an excellent way to communicate when we all want to go our separate ways.

Tech tragedy No. 3: Cracked phone**Solution:** Utilize a screen protector

For many, putting a screen protector or shatter-proof case on your phone seems like second nature. If you've never experienced a shattered screen however, there's nothing worse. For those who may be taking more adventurous trips or are planning to use your phone frequently throughout the journey, prepping your device ahead of time will be worthwhile. Think of it this way: it's better to add an extra layer of protection and not need it, than to skip the screen protector and wish you had it.

Tech Tragedy No. 4: Limited Wi-Fi**Solution:** Purchase a portable global hotspot

Similarly, to communicating without a phone plan, finding a strong or reliable Wi-Fi signal can be difficult. Whether you're using the internet to navigate the streets of a new city or looking up reviews for nearby restaurants, you need your internet. Try the [Skyroam Solis](https://www.skyroam.com/solis) (<https://www.skyroam.com/solis>), a simple way to get Wi-Fi on the go and ensure that you're always connected.

Tech Tragedy No. 5: Lost or stolen device**Solution:** Backup your device's data

Smartphones, laptops and tablets are all prime targets for thieves when traveling. Not to mention, it's far too easy to leave one of your devices on the table of a cafe, at the hotel you've since checked out of, or in one of the bins at airport security. Now that we all rely on our smartphones for so much, having one stolen or misplaced can feel like the end of the world. Before you travel, be sure to back up all your device's data onto an [external hard drive](#) or a secondary device (preferably one you won't be taking with you). It's the information on our devices that's priceless; the hardware is replaceable.

Tech Tragedy No. 6: Adapting to international sockets**Solution:** Purchase an international travel adapter

It's a drag when you arrive at your international destination, only to realize that the hotel's electricity sockets are completely different than those in your home country. Sure, you can do a little research ahead of time to purchase all new electronic devices, but rather than replacing all of your chargers, hair tools, or travel steamer, simply purchase an international travel adapter. You can find them just about anywhere, and they'll convert your electronic tools to several international sockets.

Tech Tragedy No. 7: Running out of battery**Solution:** Pack a portable charger

Using your smartphone as a GPS, computer and camera when traveling is sure to quickly drain its battery. I always make sure to pack a portable charger when traveling. When I'm off exploring a new city from morning until evening, I can be sure that my smartphone is always fully charged. It's a much more reassuring feeling than scouring local coffee shops, convenience stores or hotels for an available outlet.

Tech Tragedy No. 8: Digital identity theft**Solution:** Always use a secure Wi-Fi network

Identity theft is a growing problem worldwide— especially for travelers who use unsecured internet connections, always carry extensive personal documentation with them, and share their credit cards with merchants whom they know nothing about and will never see again. If you're using free Wi-Fi sources when traveling, always be sure that your connections are secure; always try to use a website that starts with "HTTPS" (not simply "HTTP"). The S stands for "secure" and indicates that the data is encrypted for more protection. For more tips on using public Wi-Fi networks, check out [this guide](http://www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0014-tips-using-public-wi-fi-networks) (<http://www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0014-tips-using-public-wi-fi-networks>) from the Federal Trade Commission.

Tech Tragedy No. 9: International site info is in another language

Solution: Download a mobile translator app

When traveling internationally, you often encounter a language barrier. It can be pretty difficult to find local restaurants, attractions or travel information when it's all in a language you don't understand.

Before traveling to a location where you don't speak the native language, always remember to download a translator app on your smartphone.

You can simply copy and paste any information into the app's query, and instantly be able to read a site's information.

Tech Tragedy No. 10: Device runs out of mobile storage

Solution: Register for a cloud storage site

The 21st century has created a new breed of "digital souvenir" that oftentimes spirals into a disorganized array of vacation photos and travel documents. We upload and create so much additional data when traveling that our devices run out of storage space. We've all experienced this scenario: You're at a monumental landmark or ready to snap a candid moment when your phone's lack of storage prevents you from getting the shot. A cloud storage site such as Google Drive (<https://www.google.com/drive/>), Dropbox (<https://www.dropbox.com/>) or Evernote (<https://evernote.com/>) allows you to upload this information to the cloud and save the space on your mobile device.

