WHAT IS INTERNET SPEED AND HOW MUCH DO I NEED?

The "internet" is an electronic communications network that connects computer networks and facilities around the world.[1] Internet speed is the rate at which you can download (receive) or upload (send) data. Every page, image and video arrives at your computer as "small pieces of data or packets." How fast these packets move on the internet is measured in megabits per second (Mbps).[2]

The term "broadband" commonly refers to high-speed internet access that is always on and faster than dial-up access. Broadband includes several technologies using Digital Subscriber Lines (DSL); Cable Modems; Fiber; Wireless; Satellite; or Broadband over Powerlines (BPL).[3]

The exact speed you need depends on your use, for example, whether you use the internet to read emails, watch movies, play games, attend long-distance classes, or share data files. It also depends on how many people use the broadband connection at your house. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) publishes Household Broadband and Broadband Speed Guides to help you decide what internet speed is best for you.[4]

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WHY IS INTERNET SPEED IMPORTANT TO OPEN ACCESS?

"[T]he Internet has become essential to our everyday lives for everything from communication to job postings, healthcare, and education, and we [our communities] need to guarantee quality and affordable open access to everyone."[5] Internet service providers often advertise their speeds as maximum rates ("up to …"); and actual speeds will vary due to many factors.

But adequate internet speeds, reasonably related to contract requirements, are important to an open internet. Throttling, which occurs when an internet service provider intentionally slows down traffic - especially from certain sites that the provider may want to disadvantage, is a threat to open access.

Mayor Keller "joined more than 80 other U.S. mayors in calling for cities to take all available steps to ensure the internet remains open and to keep

[1] Merriam Webster, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Internet, retrieved September 2, 2019.
[2] Federal Communications Commission (FCC), *Broadband Service for the Home: A Consumer's Guide*, https://www.fcc.gov/research-reports/guides/broadband-service-home-consumers-guide, retrieved Sept. 2, 2019.
[3] FCC, *Types of Broadband Connections*, https://www.fcc.gov/general/types-broadband-connections, Sept. 2, 2019.
[4] FCC, Household Broadband Guide, https://www.fcc.gov/research-reports/guides/household-broadband-guide; and Broadband Speed Guide, https://www.fcc.gov/reports-research/guides/broadband-speed-guide, Sept. 2, 2019.
[5] Lindsay Stern, *Broadband Providers are Quietly Taking Advantage of an Internet without Net Neutrality Protections*, Public Knowledge Blog, https://www.publicknowledge.org/news-blog/blogs/broadband-providers-are-quietly-taking-advantage-of-an-internet-without-net-neutrality-protections, Jan. 28, 2019.

private companies from throttling, blocking or limiting content on the internet."[6]

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WHERE DO I FIND INTERNET SPEED TESTING TOOLS?

Consumers use internet speed test tools to verify that their internet service providers are making truthful claims about contracted internet speeds. Many tools are free and some provide additional information. If you would like to check how experts rate these tools, you could go to these webpages:

- https://www.broadbandsearch.net/blog/best-internet-speed-test-sites
- https://www.lifewire.com/internet-speed-test-sites-2626177
- https://www.digitaltrends.com/computing/best-internet-speed-tests
- https://launchberg.com/10-best-free-internet-speed-test-solution

The articles at these webpages list the following free testing tools (among others):

- **SpeedOf.Me at** https://speedof.me
- **Speedtest.net by Ookla at** https://www.speedtest.net
- **TestMy.net at** https://testmy.net

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WHAT IF I HAVE A COMPLAINT ABOUT MY INTERNET SPEED?

The FCC has limited authority over internet service providers, but it provides a Consumer Guide for Broadband and Internet Users[7] and a Consumer Complaint Center where you can file a complaint or tell the FCC your story.[8]

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WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE ALBUQUERQUE CABLE, INTERNET AND PEG ADVISORY BOARD?

The Albuquerque Cable, Internet and PEG Advisory Board (also "Cable Board") has no authority to regulate internet customer rates or service standards. In addition, the Cable Board is not responsible for the results of any internet speed testing you may undertake or any consequences that may be related in any way to your use of these tools. However, the Cable Board believes it is important to provide you this information for your convenience and to help you with your own research. The Cable Board wants to empower you, the consumer, by enhancing your knowledge.

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[6] *Mayor Keller signs Pledge to Keep Albuquerque's Internet Open*, https://www.cabq.gov/mayor/news/mayor-keller-signs-pledge-to-keep-albuquerque2019s-internet-open.

[7] FCC, *Broadband and Internet Consumer Guide*, https://www.fcc.gov/general/broadband-and-internet-guides, retrieved Sept. 2, 2019.

[8] FCC, Consumer Complaint Center, consumercomplaints.fcc.gov, retrieved Sept. 2, 2019.