

INTERNET OF THINGS

QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN PICKING AN INTERNET PLAN

There's no single "best speed" when it comes to internet service, which is why choosing a plan can be confusing. The speeds that work fine for your neighbor might not be even close to what your household needs, since there are many factors to consider and differences in how many people use the internet.

Before we get to the questions, let's review the meaning of bandwidth and how it relates to internet speed. Bandwidth refers to the amount of data that can be transferred over an internet connection per second. It's usually measured in Mbps (megabits per second), and every internet plan has a specified maximum bandwidth, such as 50 Mbps or 200 Mbps. This bandwidth is shared by all users and connected devices in a household.

It may be helpful to think of bandwidth as a highway of vehicles traveling on it; the highway is the internet connection and the vehicles are data. The wider the highway, the more vehicles can travel on it at one time and the faster they get to their destinations. The same principle

applies to data—the more bandwidth, the more information that can be transferred within a given amount of time.

To help you figure out the best internet plan for you, answer these questions:

What Are Your Current Download And Upload Speeds?

Download speed is the speed at which you can get information from the web to your device. Upload speed is the speed at which you can send information from your device to the web.

You can test your internet speed for free at www.rtmc.net/speedtest.

How Many Internet-Connected Devices Do You Have In Your Home?

Add up all the computers, tablets, smartphones, smart TVs, Blu-ray disc players, smart watches, video game consoles, streaming media devices, smart meters, smart appliances, and smart home monitoring/automation equipment you use. According to survey results released by Pew Research in May 2017,

the typical (median) American household contains five of them, and nearly one in five American households are "hyper-connected," meaning they contain 10 or more of these devices. And according to Gartner, it is estimated that there will be 21 billion connected devices by 2020. Over 3.9 Billion connected devices were in use worldwide in 2016.

The more devices you have, the more bandwidth/speed you will need. Since bandwidth is shared by every user and device connected to your home network, the demand requires an internet plan with speeds at the higher end of the spectrum. Remember, even background processes like software updates use your bandwidth.

How Do You Use The Internet?

If you only have a desktop computer that's used to check email and surf the net, then a slower internet connection (such as 6 Mbps) may suffice. However, if you have a family of several people simultaneously using your internet connection for data-intensive activities—such as streaming HD video and music, online gaming,



Questions To Ask When Picking An Internet Plan Cont...

sharing photos and videos online, video chat, and cloud storage—then you'll be less frustrated with speeds in the 25+ range.

What Are Your Internet Performance Expectations?

Let's say you occasionally watch videos online. In this case, you may be willing to tolerate slow load times and buffering. But if streaming HD movies is a cherished part of your routine, you'll be frustrated by slow speeds and the annoying lag that comes with them. Make sure the internet speed you choose is in line with the value you place on internet performance quality.

Do Family Members Or House Guests Complain About Your Internet Connection?

If your answer is "Yes" it's a sign that you might need more bandwidth/speed. However, it's important to note that other factors can also negatively impact your internet performance.

For example, if your wireless router is outdated, you may not be getting the speed you expect from your plan. Some older routers have a speed cap limiting the maximum internet speed possible. Replacing your router may be all that's necessary to get the speed you need to keep everybody happy. This should be done at least every three years because technology is changing rapidly.

Other Possible Culprits For Under Performing Internet Services Include:

- Your wireless router is in the wrong location. Keep your router centrally located and away from thick walls made of brick or concrete, water, and windows.
- Your computer is infected with a virus. This can make your internet appear to be sluggish, when in reality, it's a computer issue. Run a virus scan and if a virus is detected, follow the instructions.

Given the importance of the internet to so many activities, it's worth taking the time to find exactly the right plan for you. **Contact us today to take advantage of a special deal for faster internet packages. See our ad below.**

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Get 1 Month FREE of INTERNET

Restrictions may apply. Must get the Fast package or higher. Offer expires 2.28.18.

High School Seniors Eligible for \$1000 Scholarships

High School Seniors who live in a household served by Randolph Communications can apply for a \$1000 Scholarship.

Who can apply?

Randolph Communications will award up to seven \$1000 scholarships in each of our seven regions. Graduating seniors of customers in our service area are eligible to apply. If we do not receive any applications for a region then no scholarship will be awarded for that area. One \$1000 Scholarship may be awarded to a senior of a customer who resides in the areas outside our member territory.

How are applicants judged?

Applicants are judged on leadership in school, civic and other extracurricular activities, academic achievement, character, and the motivation to serve and succeed.

How do I apply?

Scholarship applications for students graduating in 2018 are available at www.rtc.net/scholarships or obtained from a Guidance Counselor. Deadline is April 6, 2018.

Who Profits from Your Cable TV Bill?



What are programming costs?

All satellite and cable providers (TV providers) pay each network owner (programmer) a fee for every household that receives a particular network - regardless of whether anyone in the household actually watch it.

These network fees have increased dramatically at 3½ times the inflation rate over the last 15 years. In the past five years alone, just one channel has increased by \$1.68/month per customer. When you consider that each channel in the lineup costs more to offer every year, you can begin to see why cable prices have increased so sharply.

Programmers are securing long-term contracts that contain significant fee increases, regardless of how many people actually watch. Costs for each channel are turned directly over to the programmers (Disney, Fox, Turner, etc.), and represent a vast majority of your cable TV bill.

What are service costs?

This includes the installation costs, along with maintaining and upgrading our network. The bulk of this portion is used to build a better Internet and entertainment experience, and network costs are shared among the different services we provide.

Why does your line-up include channels you never watch?

Many customers would prefer to pay for only the most popular networks and a select group of quality, special interest ones that appeal to them. This is something that many satellite and cable TV providers want to offer, but most networks prohibit this in their contracts.

Over the past couple of years, some programmers drastically altered their content without a say from the customer or TV providers. One example of this was the rebranding of the History2 channel as Viceland, which bears little resemblance to its predecessor. Randolph also had to move channels to different packages and line-up positions due to contract terms, not customer demand or viewing habits. In the end, these forced changes resulted in higher prices for customers, but the quality of programming didn't necessarily improve.

How does this happen?

It's a matter of power: Just five multi-billion-dollar corporations own or control about 90 percent of existing TV networks. While we work hard to keep these costs under control, these companies continue to use their power to demand more money.

Comcast, Disney, 21st Century Fox, CBS/Viacom and Time Warner own most of the networks you

want, as well as many of those you don't. And they won't let you have the most-popular networks unless you get the less popular ones, too. It's simple economics: They need more viewers for these less popular networks to increase their subscriber fees and their advertising fess so they can make more money.

The average household watches only 16 channels regardless. But when programmers package all of their networks together, they create bloated channel line-ups and excessive monthly cable TV bills.

To help fight against excessive network fee increases from large, powerful media conglomerates, we're a member of the National Cable Television Cooperative, a collective of more than 900 independent cable TV and broadband providers across the United States. This allows us to negotiate programming contracts as a nationwide group to gain cost benefits, but we still face an uphill battle.

As long as there is a demand for cable TV, we'll remain committed to providing you with a quality product at the best price possible. If you're looking for alternative viewing options, such as watching TV programs and movies through Internet streaming services we can help you select the right internet packages to ensure you have an enjoyable experience.

Randolph Communications is also exploring other video options that may give you more freedom to watch what you want, or at least eliminate some of what you don't want. However, these options will still require a fast and reliable network to your home. Randolph can provide that network and keep you connected to your neighbors and the rest of the world.

But know, we will continue to fight for the best TV prices for our members and customers!

What Can You Do?

Write your Congressman or Senator to let them know your opinion. To locate your representative, visit www.house.gov/representatives. You can make a difference.

YOUR CABLE TV BILL HAS 2 BIG COST BUCKETS

Programming Costs - 99% of your cable bill**

- Retransmission Fees from local broadcast stations
- Cable Network Fees from programming channels (ie. ESPN, Fox, Disney, etc.)

Cost of Service- 1% of your cable TV bill

- Updating and maintaining infrastructure like installing fiber to the home for quality TV service.
- Service calls



*The Media Monopoly and Yahoo Finance
**Based on programming costs for the Classic package.

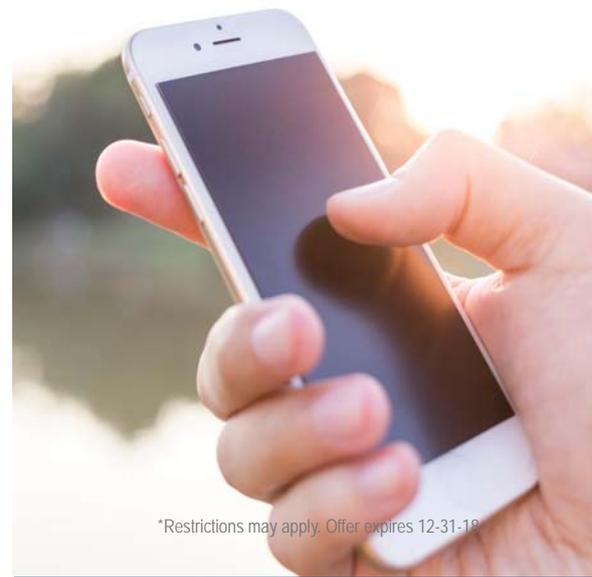
NEED HELP PAYING YOUR BILL?

Lifeline is a government assistance program that provides a monthly discount on telephone service to qualified low-income residents. Lifeline is designed to ensure that telephone service remains affordable to all North Carolina residents. The Lifeline assistance program provides a \$9.25 credit on the monthly telephone bill. You may qualify for Lifeline if your total household income is at or below 135% of the federal poverty guidelines; or if you, your dependent or your household receives one of the following:

- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Medicaid
- Federal Veterans Pension or Survivors Pension
- Federal Public Housing Assistance (FPHA)

Lifeline is available on one residential telephone line per household. If you or someone in your household has Lifeline on a wireless phone, then you cannot get it on your home phone too. You may not transfer your Lifeline discount to another person, even if he or she qualifies for Lifeline. If you believe you qualify for Lifeline, stop by our office to fill out an application. Please note that you must enroll in Lifeline service and you must provide proof of eligibility before receiving support.

UNLIMITED EVERYTHING & 3 Months FREE*



*Restrictions may apply. Offer expires 12-31-18

DATES TO REMEMBER

February 24 - FRS Scholarship Due

Randolph Telephone Membership Corp. was established in 1954 as a member-owned cooperative now serving eight exchanges in seven different counties. Randolph Telephone provides complete communication services such as local telephone access, business telephone systems, high-speed internet, MyTV, camera surveillance, computer services, web hosting and design and wireless services through its affiliate Randolph Communications.



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