

My Internet is SLOW!

Everyone experiences slowdowns in their network connections every now and then. That's just how the internet is sometimes. But when it is chronic, or there is a discernable pattern to slowdowns, it is time for some troubleshooting.

Step 1 - Check your internet speed

Internet speed checkers are not 100% accurate. So when you test your speed, if it is not what your ISP advertises, don't go ring up your lawyer to start the class action lawsuit just yet. They are however, a good gauge over time to determine relative performance. Speed testing is a good first step because they are easy to use... but not a final answer. Here are my three favorites:

#1) <http://www.speakeasy.net/speedtest>

Why I like it: easily readable, understandable. Allows multiple back-to-back tests with different servers in many locations. **Downside:** needs Java and Flash, therefore does not work on iPhone or iPad.

#2) <http://www.megapath.com/speedtestplus/>

Why I like it: Actually, I'm cheating: it is the same as #1, but goes into far more detail, and most accurate. If you want to let your inner Geek soar, this is for you. **Downside:** same as #1: no iPhone or iPad.

#3) <http://openspeedtest.com/>

Why I like it: easily readable, understandable, comparably accurate to #1 and #2. **Bonus:** works on iPad and iPhone, no Java or Flash needed. **Downside:** none.

Step 2 – Your Home Router

Sometimes, your home router (usually supplied by your ISP) is the issue. This one has an easy troubleshooting step: unplug it, leave it out for 5 minutes. Plug back in. If you have a separate cable/DSL modem + separate router, unplug both, leave out for 10 minutes. Then plug in modem first, wait 5 minutes, then plug in router.

Step 3 – Your PC/Tablet/Smartphone

This step can get really involved. But one simple step is shutdown/reboot. Works wonders for many problems, and although can take a bit of time, very easy. Plus you get to show your device who is boss – you control the power switch. (*"Heh, Heh, I'll fix you, stupid computer, I'm gonna power you down!"*)

Step 4 – Your ISP (Internet Service Provider – ATT, Comcast, RCN, WOW, Verizon, etc.)

After you have done these steps and not have had any success, it could be your ISP. You could have called them first thing, but they will make you do Step 1,2,3 anyway before admitting it's on their end. So do Steps 1-2-3 first before calling them and shortcut the time you spend on the phone.

-John Becker