

## Slow Internet, Part 2

This is of course shocking news, but your favorite newsletter author has made a mistake. I sent out my “Slow Internet” newsletter describing many details how to determine if your internet connection is slow, **but I did not define what slow is!** My apologies for this oversight.

In the ancient times when dinosaurs roamed the earth and we were still using dial-up modems, 32 or 48 kilobits per second was considered “speeding along”. That was state of the art, and it was fine for the websites of the day: mostly text-only, no buttons, no videos, few if any pictures or graphics. That did not last long – as websites got more sophisticated (photos, streaming video) the need for speed has only increased.

Speed is measured in “bits per second”: the shorthand for this is “kbps”, or Kilo (thousands) Bits Per Second. The next step up is “mbps”, or Mega (millions) Bits Per Second. In general, download speed is more important than upload speed, but a very slow upload speed is not good either. Currently the FCC classifies “Broadband” speed as 4 mbps download and 1 mbps upload. Anything under that is considered “dial-up”. Below is a chart of typical “broadband” services available in the Chicago suburban area currently:

Service Provider	Service Brand	Download Speed	Upload Speed (approx.)
ATT	DSL Basic	384,000 kbps	128,000 kbps
ATT	DSL Pro	768,000 kbps	384,000 kbps
ATT	DSL Business	1.5 mbps	768,000 kbps
ATT	U-Verse Basic	12 mbps	1.5 mbps
ATT	U-Verse	25 mbps	8 mbps
ATT	U-Verse Bonded Pair	45 mbps	15 mbps
ATT	Fiber	100 mbps	100 mbps
Comcast / RCN	Basic	3 mbps	1 mbps
Comcast / RCN	Starter	6 mbps	1.5 mbps
Comcast / RCN	Performance	25 mbps	3-6 mbps
Comcast / RCN	Blast	105 mbps	6-12 mbps
Comcast-only	Extreme	150 mbps	18 mbps

Don't know what service you signed up for? Check your billing statement, it is shown there. Look up your service on the chart, then run the speed test from the previous newsletter. The best method is to take a speed test 3 times at various times of the day, then average the results. If the average is consistently more than 50% different than the speed you signed up for, call your provider and have them run a “line test” – both ATT and Comcast can do remote tests without coming out to your home or place of business.

Have Fun!

-John Becker