

## US Residential Broadband Service: Speed Continues to Rise, Pricing Holds Steady

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### Broadband Speed Survey: How Fast Is High-Speed?

Broadband service is no longer seen as a luxury; in many US households, it is considered a necessity. And in many of those households, the users' most important concern is the speed or available bandwidth of their broadband connection.

Bandwidth, sometimes also called throughput, is defined as the width of a telecommunications channel. In the analog world, bandwidth is usually measured in Hertz—cycles per second. In the digital world, which includes broadband data services, bandwidth is typically measured in bits per second (bps). These bits per second are normally measured in kilobits per second (Kbps) or megabits per second (Mbps).

The amount of bandwidth that is available to a broadband data service end-user is important for a number of reasons, including:

- As websites become increasingly “media rich” and integrate more video and audio content, it takes a greater amount of bandwidth to access these sites. The more bandwidth an Internet service offers, the faster the end-user can access them.
- Every year, consumers around the world download more and more files from the Web. Similar to the website discussion, an increasing number of these files are high-definition video files, which require significant bandwidth to download.
- Broadband service providers commonly use their available bandwidth as a marketing tool, particularly if they are comparing their service to a competitor's that offers less bandwidth.

As a general rule of thumb in the broadband world, more bandwidth is better. Consumers around the world readily recognize this fact, and a growing number of them are looking for a broadband service that will provide a greater amount of bandwidth.

In order to better report on the bandwidth issue, for the fourth consecutive year In-Stat conducted a survey designed to measure download and upload speeds for residential broadband Internet connections in the United States. In addition, we polled broadband subscribers about their broadband services in order to better understand the dynamics of the US residential broadband market.

#### HIGHLIGHTS

- US residential broadband speeds continue to increase. Between YE2009 and YE2010, downstream bandwidth across all broadband access technologies increased by XX%.
- The average downstream speed of a US broadband connection is XXMbps, while the average upstream is XXMbps.

## Key Findings

The key findings of this survey are:

- In the US, the majority of residential broadband connections continue to be cable modem or digital subscriber line (DSL) connections. XX percent of the survey respondents used one of these two access technologies in their home.
- Measured on an annual basis, the average downstream speed across all access technologies increased by XX%. Fiber-to-the-home downstream speeds showed a significant increase, while cable modem service, DSL, and satellite broadband service also experienced solid speed increases.
- Also measured on an annual basis, the average upstream speed across all access technologies increased by a significantly larger percentage, rising XX%.
- The average downstream speed for all of the survey respondents was XXMbps.
- The average upstream speed for all of the survey respondents was XXMbps.

**Figure 1. Residential Broadband Service in the United States:  
Average Downstream Speed by Access Technology (Mbps)**

XX

- Among all access technologies, fiber-to-the-home (FTTH) provided the fastest downstream connection, followed by cable modem service.
- US residential broadband subscribers were generally satisfied with the current speed of their broadband service. XX percent of the survey respondents stated they were either “very satisfied” or “somewhat satisfied” with their current connection.
- The average monthly price paid for broadband Internet service was \$XX, up just XX% from the 2009 average.
- In addition to their wired residential broadband connection, XX% of survey respondents also had a mobile wireless broadband connection.

## Report Summary

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The speed of residential broadband connections in the US continues to increase. This report, In-Stat's fourth annual survey of broadband speeds, shows that downstream bandwidth to the home increased by XX% in 2010.

This report provides survey results from US broadband subscribers about the amount of bandwidth currently available to their home. It details the type of broadband access technology (i.e., cable modem, DSL, FTTH, etc.) being used, the company providing the service, the download and upload speeds of the subscribers' broadband connection, how much they are paying for broadband service, and details how many respondents also have a mobile wireless broadband connection.

Fielded in December 2010, the survey polled 518 residential broadband end-users who are members of In-Stat's Technology Adoption Panel (TAP). The TAP is an online panel of approximately 18,000 US-based technology users and decision makers interested in contributing their opinions and insights about technology usage and technology issues in the workplace.

## Table of Contents

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Broadband Speed Survey: How Fast Is High-Speed? .....	1
Key Findings.....	2
Survey Overview.....	5
The Broadband Speed Test.....	5
Survey Results.....	6
Broadband Access Technology: Type of Connection .....	6
Broadband Service Provider .....	6
Level of Satisfaction with Current Bandwidth.....	7
Download Speed .....	8
Upload Speed.....	9
Broadband Service: Average Speeds by Access Technology.....	10
Broadband Bandwidth Comparison, 2007 to 2010 .....	11
Bandwidth by Access Technology .....	11
Aggregate Bandwidth by Year .....	13
Monthly Price Paid .....	14
Willingness to Pay for More Bandwidth.....	15
Do You Also Have a Mobile Wireless Broadband Connection? .....	15
Appendix: Survey Respondent Bandwidth by Access Technology.....	17
Cable Modem Service .....	17
DSL .....	17
Fiber-to-the-Home.....	18
Fixed Wireless Broadband .....	18
Satellite Broadband.....	19

**List of Tables**

---

Table 1. Broadband Access Technology: Type of Connection .....6

Table 2. Respondents' Broadband Service Providers .....7

Table 3. Speed of Connection: Level of Satisfaction .....7

Table 4. Bandwidth: Download Speed Test Results.....8

Table 5. Bandwidth: Upload Speed Test Results .....9

Table 6. US Residential Broadband Service: Average Speeds by Access Technology..... 10

Table 7. Price Paid Monthly for Broadband ..... 14

Table 8. Willingness to Pay More for an Increase in Downstream Speed..... 15

Table 9. Mobile Wireless Broadband Connections ..... 16

Table 10. Cable Modem Service: Download and Upload Speeds..... 17

Table 11. DSL Service: Download and Upload Speeds ..... 17

Table 12. FTTH: Download and Upload Speeds ..... 18

Table 13. Fixed Wireless Broadband: Download and Upload Speeds ..... 18

Table 14. Satellite Broadband: Download and Upload Speeds..... 19

**List of Figures**

---

Figure 1. Residential Broadband Service in the United States: Average Downstream Speed by Access Technology (Mbps) .....2

Figure 2. Average Downstream Speed by Access Technology: 2007–2010..... 11

Figure 3. Average Upstream Speed by Access Technology: 2007–2010 ..... 12

Figure 4. Aggregate Downstream Speed: 2007–2010..... 13

Figure 5. Aggregate Upstream Speed: 2007–2010 ..... 14