



NEWS

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See MCI v. FCC, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).

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FCC SURVEY FINDS 4 OUT OF 5 AMERICANS DON'T KNOW THEIR BROADBAND SPEEDS

Agency Announces Plans for National Speed Testing, Starts Recruitment for 10,000 volunteers

Washington, DC -- Today the Federal Communications Commission released the results of a survey on the consumer broadband experience. The survey found that 80 percent of broadband users in the United States do not know the speed of their broadband connection.

The survey is part of the agency's overall broadband speed initiative, which involves several bureaus and offices and is being coordinated by the Commission's Consumer Task Force. Through the initiative, the agency will also measure the actual speeds that consumers receive and compare them to the speeds that broadband providers advertise.

FCC Chairman Julius Genachowski said, "Speed matters. The more broadband subscribers know about what speeds they need and what speeds they get, the more they can make the market work and push faster speeds over broadband networks."

Today, the Consumer Task Force announced two initiatives that will help the FCC determine the broadband speeds consumers are getting in their homes and on their mobile devices, a key recommendation in the National Broadband Plan.

In the first of these initiatives, *the FCC is asking today for 10,000 volunteers* to participate in a scientific study to measure home broadband speed in the U.S. Specialized hardware will be installed in the homes of volunteers to measure the performance of all the country's major Internet service providers across geographic regions and service tiers. The FCC is partnering with SamKnows Limited in this effort, the same firm that successfully conducted a similar test in the United Kingdom. A Public Notice asking for comment on the test plan was released in April 2010 and can be found at http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DA-10-670A1.pdf.

This study will culminate in a "State of Broadband" report to be released later this year. The tests are also a key part of the Broadband Action Agenda (described at <http://www.broadband.gov/plan/broadband-action-agenda.html>). The Action Agenda details a

number of initiatives designed to foster competition and maximize consumer benefits across the broadband marketplace.

Anyone can register as a volunteer for this national test at www.TestMyISP.com. Volunteers will be able to track the performance of their own broadband service, as well as providing valuable data for the FCC, Internet service providers, and the public at large.

Next, the FCC's Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau is issuing a Public Notice today to look at ways to measure mobile broadband speed. More and more consumers are using mobile wireless devices to access the Web, sometimes as a primary Internet connection. The Public Notice asks for input on the best ways to measure mobile broadband speeds, the ways that speed measurements can be used to help improve service, and the information consumers should have about the speed of mobile broadband coverage.

The FCC welcomes comments from all interested parties and the general public on this Public Notice. Comments can be filed through the agency's Electronic Comment Filing System at <http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/ecfs/>, or in other ways described in the Public Notice itself. The Public Notice can be found at http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DA-10-988A1.pdf.

Ultimately, the FCC hopes to develop tests that help each individual consumer in the U.S. determine his or her own broadband speed. The agency took a first step in March by providing two speed tests that consumers can use at home or on their wireless phones. These consumer tests can be found at <http://www.broadband.gov/qualitytest/about/>. The national initiatives announced today are intended to develop more scientific and consistent broadband speed measures.

“Better information can help all consumers choose the broadband services that best meet their needs,” said Joel Gurin, Chief of the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau of the FCC. “Today, most people just know that their home broadband speed is supposed to be ‘blazing fast.’ They need more meaningful information to know exactly what speed they need for the applications they want to run, and what provider and plan is their best choice. The difference between an inexpensive low-speed plan and an expensive, high-speed plan can be hundreds of dollars a year. Consumers need to be able to choose wisely.”

Details on Today's Survey Results

The survey found that no demographic group had good awareness of their home broadband speed (the survey asked specifically about download speed). But there were some demographic differences. For example, 71 percent of men do not know what speed they're getting, while the figure is 90 percent for women. With respect to age, 73 percent of those between the ages of 18 and 29 do not know their home broadband speed, while the number goes up to 88 percent of people age 65 and over.

Most Americans are satisfied with the broadband speed they are getting. Fully 91 percent of broadband users say they are “very” or “somewhat” satisfied with the speed they get at home.

The comparable number for mobile broadband, which is not yet technologically capable of the same speeds as home broadband, is 71 percent satisfaction. As a point of comparison, 92 percent of cell phone users are very or somewhat satisfied with their cell phone service overall.

The FCC's survey of consumers, conducted by Abt/SRBI and Princeton Survey Research Associates, International from April 19 to May 2, 2010, interviewed 3,005 American adults. The national random digit dial survey was conducted in English and Spanish and the sample included both landline and cell phones. For responses based on those with personal cell phones (2,463 respondents) the margin of error is plus or minus two percentage points. For responses based on home broadband users (1,742 respondents), the margin of error is plus or minus 2.6 percentage points.

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