



Reliability is the new measure for

# Evaluating Internet

**Over the last decade, businesses have seen significant progress and advancements in the technology and services available to them.** Technologies like enterprise apps, public and private clouds and advanced telecommunications not only improve the way businesses operate but also how they interact with partners and customers. At the heart of these tools are the Internet and networks, which form the central system that powers the vast majority of modern technology.

Every company today, whether a national enterprise or a small local business, has evolved in some way to adopt these technologies. This means that business owners, employers and employees heavily rely on the Internet to operate successfully. Recent Juniper Research indicates that the total number connected devices (including tablets, servers and smartphones) is set to exceed 50 billion globally by 2022. Much of this usage will continue to be fueled by the workplace. Given the potential for technology to transform business, and the consequential downsides to technological failure, it is more important than ever to critically and carefully evaluate services and providers.

### **The way we think about Internet is evolving beyond speed**

For years, businesses naturally have selected Internet providers that offer the fastest upload and download speeds for the best price. Like most things in life, choosing Internet service has fallen under “the faster the better” mentality — from commercials on television contrasting top

speeds to countless limited-time deals offered to potential customers — it’s undeniable that Internet speed matters. Think back to the days of dial-up, when employees would sign onto their computers then go get coffee, only to return to browsers barely opening. That could be considered prehistoric compared to the lightning-fast speeds available today, which enable things like mobile device use in the field or business video chats with partners in another country.

Speed is inarguably important, and with services like Gigabit Internet and Fiber connectivity, most businesses today have access to fast speeds they need to operate successfully. However, high-speed Internet is only as fast as the bandwidth it provides and only as useful as the consistency it delivers. Think of it like the speed limit of a highway versus the number of lanes and the likelihood of roadblocks. How valuable is the ability to go fast if there’s congestion and unreliable conditions that often hinder you from doing so?



There is an opportunity for businesses to take their operations to the next level by thinking about Internet in a new way. Matt Davis, principal analyst at Independence Research, recently polled more than 500 small- and medium-sized businesses in the U.S. and found that “Internet speed is still the top reason businesses stay loyal to their existing Internet provider, but that is followed extremely closely by service reliability as the second reason.”

### **The shift to reliability as a top priority**

There are many reasons why reliability is the new standard that businesses need to consider when deciding which communication and Internet services and providers will best meet their business needs. A 2018 study on small-business risk confirmed that business interruption is one of the top three concerns for small-business owners. For these businesses rely on Internet access for everything from point-of-sale transactions, website promotions, cloud-based payroll and inventory applications, the risk of downtime is daunting and can result in loss of revenue and employee productivity.

In today’s workplace environment, it is unacceptable for employees to be unable to connect to the Internet because it is down or to be unable to access critical functions because they are working from home or a remote location. Businesses move faster than ever before, and they risk losing productivity, sales and customer trust if their services are unreliable. For businesses, consistent, far-reaching communication services can be better achieved through cloud-based technologies, for example. By using communication tools powered through the cloud, access to critical information is more easily achieved. Additionally, this can help avoid common issues one might face with on-site technology or infrastructure like unexpected power outages or the need for a technician to be dispatched to your location if there is a maintenance issue.

### **Reliability in the decision-making process**

Not only should the service be reliable, but providers also should serve as a true partner for your business to remedy any issues and provide consultation when needed. When providers act as a partner and a provider, businesses are in a better position to utilize the solutions that make the most sense for their particular needs, deliver the greatest return on investment, and improve customer satisfaction. By choosing a service provider that proactively monitors its networks for interruptions and downtime and is available to respond to maintenance needs 24/7, businesses will have greater peace of mind. This level of service enables them to focus on serving the needs and meeting the expectations of their customers.

Internet performance is critical because it enables optimized operations, drives customer satisfaction and enhances overall success for small and medium-sized businesses. Some service providers can offer fast speeds, but your business will be vulnerable unless they can also provide reliable network performance, backed with knowledgeable, professional support. Investing in Internet services and new technologies in the coming years will be a priority for businesses, so when it comes time for your business to explore new providers and services, keeping reliability top of mind will be a significant factor in your long-term success.

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