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Despite Data Caps and Throttling, Industry Says Mobile Can Replace Home Internet

Posted by BeauHD on Wednesday September 19, 2018 @05:20PM from the like-it-or-not dept.

An anonymous reader quotes a report from Ars Technica: AT&T and Verizon are trying to convince the Federal Communications Commission that mobile broadband is good enough for Internet users who don't have access to fiber or cable services. The carriers made this claim despite the data usage and speed limitations of mobile services. In the mobile market, even "unlimited" plans can be throttled to unusable speeds after a customer uses just 25GB or so a month. Mobile carriers impose even stricter limits on phone hotspots, making it difficult to use mobile services across multiple devices in the home. The carriers ignored those limits in filings they submitted for the FCC's annual review of broadband deployment.

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UK (Score:1)
by webmistressrachel (903577)
is the poor man's pay-as-you-go broadband. No caps after midnight.

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Re: (Score:2)
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Re: (Score:1)
by Anonymous Homonym (1901660)
I already has.

Re: (Score:1)
by webmistressrachel (903577)
Not on Three PAYG you're not, lol!

Actual limit much lower (Score:2)
by SuperKendall (25149)
I have my mom on a T-Mobile hot spot because it's by far the fastest connection where she lives (other option is DSL that literally 10x slower). However the data cap is absurdly low - 10GB, way less than the summary mentions. She could make do pretty well with 25GB (even streaming video) but 10GB is just on the edge where it often runs out near the end of the month, and there's no way to add more data when it runs out.

Re: Actual limit much lower (Score:1)
by Anonymous Coward
So get T-mobile One and use an old iPhone for the hotspot. The 3g is unlimited after you burn the 32GB of LTE. The plus side is it is also a phone.

Re: (Score:1)
by Anonymous Coward
T-Mobile One will throttle your hotspot after 500MB. There is no add-on/upgrade package to avoid that. I still have a Simple Plan because I am not throttled until I hit my data cap of 17GB. It's easy to blow through it when not paying attention, but for regular travel support (i.e. not streaming videos, not downloading gigabyte isos) it's more than capable. Verizon is now offering 5G Home with no data caps. If you can get in on that service package, you should just because that subscription will be worth it.

Re: (Score:2)
by SuperKendall (25149)
The hotspot already works like that. The connection does not go dead on the hotspot when you've exceeded 10GB, it just goes to 3G speeds. But for all modern internet use that is very nearly dead, and not useful even for most web browsing.

Re: (Score:2)
by ArylAkamov (4036877)
We're in the exact same situation. I find it weird that their phone plans cost less and offer more data compared to their hotspots, if I had done more research I would have gotten an old android phone, rooted it and use that for the hotspot.

Re: (Score:2)
by SuperKendall (25149)
I thought of that same approach but the hotspots had more reliable reception, whereas phones could just barely find a signal at her location. I keep meaning to ask if I can get a T-Mobile booster for that spot, then it would work... However AFAIK the tethering limit (if you turned a phone into a hotspot) is 10GB also, so it's pretty much the same deal!!

Re: Actual limit much lower (Score:5, Insightful)
by tgeek (941867) on Wednesday September 19, 2018 @06:37PM (#57344930)
Try checking to see if the carriers servicing your area offer fixed wireless service. Basically, it's an LTE hotspot designed to be used in one place, usually operating on a less congested low band. In most cases it'll be similarly priced to an "unlimited" handset plan, but with more generous data caps and friendlier throttling policies. And, of course, no tethering restrictions. NB: As with any wireless/LTE connection data rates can vary anywhere from "awesome" to "why bother" depending on all the usual factors.

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Re: (Score:2)
by Jane O. Public (1010737)
My home internet connection caps at 1TB and I've come close to hitting that mark before.

I easily blow through 10GB in less than a day. Easily.

Of course they fucking say that. (Score:1)
by Narcocide (102829)
Do you really think they hate overage fees?

Not even trying (Score:4, Insightful)
by VeryFluffyBunny (5037285) on Wednesday September 19, 2018 @05:31PM (#57344522)
The big telecoms monopolies aren't even trying, now that they've pwned the FCC.

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Exactly as planned (Score:5, Insightful)
by GrumpySteen (1250194) on Wednesday September 19, 2018 @05:33PM (#57344548)
You didn't think the industry spent billions lobbying against net neutrality without expecting to make it all back, did you? They want everyone to be tied to wireless so that they can throttle, cap and otherwise limit their connections in order to force customers into more expensive plans. The goal is now and always has been to extract as much profit while providing the bare minimum service that they can get away with.

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Re: (Score:2)
by magariy (164372)
You didn't think the industry spent billions lobbying against net neutrality without expecting to make it all back, did you? Let's all repeat this until we can remember it: blanket throttling a given connecting device because it reached a monthly limit has nothing to do with net neutrality. Net neutrality is about not throttling per-content traffic at different rates.

2 hidden comments

Not exactly (Score:3)
by rsilvergun (571051)
they want everyone to have both and to pay around \$160/mo for the landline and \$70/mo (+\$35 for your phone) for the wireless.

Thing is, I don't think voters are going to do anything about it. Texas, for example, has a senate candidate (Beto O'Rourke) who refuses corporate PAC money but he's behind in the polls by 9 points. Nancy Pelosi beat her primary challenger and she's as corrupt as they come. So far the voters still vote for whoever has the most money, regardless of where that money came from.

Not if you want to also do "streaming gaming" (Score:2)
by xxxjonBoyxxx (565205)
Not if you want to also do "streaming gaming". As for me, I'm happy I investing in MAME, Roms and standalone games early and often - the pay-as-you-go, loot box or online models seem like a PITA no one should have to deal with.

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Re: (Score:2)
by HornWumpus (783565)
Is that what they're calling piratebay these days? It is getting close to the end of the month, better figure out what I'm downloading. Data cap is, use it or lose it.

Re: (Score:2)
by coastwalker (307620)
YouTube university lectures, public talks and many specialist podcasts are also worth having along with the books. All of human knowledge is out there for the cost of a broadband connection and a PC with a decent sized screen. A mobile is basically a social media and shopping device designed for monetization of the user. Tablets are for binge watching TV and Netflix but good luck getting a mobile deal that is good value for tethering.

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Dunno about that. (Score:3)

by [l.rid10t \(595143 \)](#) on Wednesday September 19, 2018 @05:38PM (#57344588)

I'm on 6mb DSL (768k up) and only got that recently after some fiber was run. Prior I could get 3mb DSL but I was on the edge of service for that, and S:N ratio kept me from having a decent connection - I'd loose connection every 5-10 minutes. So 1.5mb DSL.

While my phone co (Windstream) has been making massive improvements in connectivity where I am (mostly rural, N Central Fl) I'm still on the edge of connectivity for my AT&T cell/data. As in, I may have 3g, or 4g. Or LTE. I may have one dot on connection meter, or two. Or mostly none. And depending on where I am in the house or what part of the "yard" (5 acres) I'm in.

So no, when lack of density prevents cable or DSL from being available, you can't always depend on cellular - until AT&T et al start building more towers.

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Re:Dunno about that. (Score:4, Interesting)

by [Scarred Intellect \(1648867 \)](#) on Wednesday September 19, 2018 @05:52PM (#57344674) [Homepage Journal](#)

I feel your pain. I could either get 1.5mbps DSL, or fork over \$75/mo for 5mbps/1.5mpbs fixed wireless. I opted for the fixed wireless. It could barely stream Netflix, which is about all my wife does at home (that's a lie, she does tons, I love you, honey!)

When I moved to another county on the other side of the river, similar choices. This time I'm lucky that an enterprising neighbor about 15 years ago started his own ISP off a nearby fiber backbone. I now get anywhere from 25-90mbps up and down, with no restriction, for a solid \$40/mo.

He started this when he moved out for himself. Neighbors caught on, wanted in. He doesn't advertise, just maintains his little network. If you have the resources and know-how, look into it. Ask some neighbors if they'd be interested. His little network is more reliable than the larger commercial carriers around, though I have to ask to get access to some common ports, such as 80 and 443...

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Re: (Score:2)

by [Mashiki \(184564 \)](#)

So no, when lack of density prevents cable or DSL from being available, you can't always depend on cellular - until AT&T et al start building more towers.

Lack of density? How about when there's plenty of density. A friend of mine lives in a city of 41k people, if you want DSL the fastest you can get is 3mb/512k service. The other option is cable, but at least you can get up to 100Mbps service, and that's in one of the most densely populated areas of Canada(southern ontario). Rogers fought tooth and nail against opening the market to TPIA options and the CRTC had to sanction them with fines. It's actually bad enough that a local ISP has started laying the

Time for a Rural Electrification Act, Part Deux (Score:3)

by [CrimsonAvenger \(580665 \)](#) on Wednesday September 19, 2018 @05:45PM (#57344616)

Back in the '30's, electricity wasn't to be had out in the sticks. Part of FDR's New Deal basically had the Feds pay for the wires to fix that.

It could be done again, if we wanted to spend a metric fuckton of money doing so. Note, for those who want to blame a political Party for the failure to do so, it hasn't been done under Trump (R), nor was it done under Obama (D), nor Bush (R), nor Clinton (D). This has been a bipartisan "Yuck Foo" to the people who live out in the boonies (probably mostly because there aren't enough of them to matter come election time)....

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Re: (Score:2)

by [HornWumpus \(783565 \)](#)

We're still paying 1 billion a year for 'rural electrification'. All to rent seeking scumbags. Not a good argument for it, rather the opposite.

Re: (Score:1)

by Anonymous Coward

Ummm, Clinton did give the telcos a \$200B gift to wire the country fro high speed internet. They pocked the money and did fuck all.

Re: (Score:2)

by [CrimsonAvenger \(580665 \)](#)

The Telecommunications Act of 1996?

No, that wasn't like the Rural Electrification Act. That bit of law was intended to create more competition among various service providers, NOT to guarantee the provision of such services to everyone and their brother...

offerers of fake unlimited plans (Score:2)

by [presidenteloco \(659168 \)](#)

should be throttled.

For blatant Orwellian abuse of the language, if for nothing else.

Good enough for the 19th century (Score:2)

by [DavidMZ \(3411229 \)](#)

I guess mobile broadband is good enough if you don't need internet in your line of work... That probably excludes most professionals working from home and farmers who are more and more reliant on technology.

1 hidden comment

Why are they trying to argue... (Score:4, Informative)

by [bjdevil66 \(583941 \)](#) on Wednesday September 19, 2018 @05:51PM (#57344670)

...this untenable position? Money, of course.

A: From the article:

If the FCC decides that broadband is being deployed to all Americans in a reasonable and timely fashion, the agency isn't required to do as much to accelerate deployment or promote competition.

In other words, it's about cutting capital investment costs to increase profit margins.

The kicker is that they were just crying about how net neutrality was a terrible thing because they couldn't manage traffic better to keep mobile service running. They were also just crying about how mobile data caps are absolutely necessary to keep from "clogging the tubes" (an outright lie).

But they're trying to claim they want to claim that mobile is an adequate substitute for home/wired internet??

(This exact same argument failed in 2017 after Ajit Pai initially supported the idea but backtracked after taking a shit-ton of heat from the public and consumer advocates.)

Corporate executives don't deal in facts. They deal in their own malleable truth sundaes, sprinkled on top with factoids that they can sell in a different package at any time...

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Yeah. (Score:2)

by [gatlirls \(1315141 \)](#)

but your your were so preoccupied with whether or not they could, they didn't stop to think if they should.

Re: (Score:2)

by [Fly Swatter \(30498 \)](#)

Where is 'here'? You left out the most important thing about which upon you base your entire troll?

Re: (Score:2)

by [VeryFluffyBunny \(5037285 \)](#)

... If you can take over the FCC, you can get away with offering less for more. That's kind of the point.

The Republican party has long been owned by Telco's, it seems.

I thought that deregulation and doing away with red tape was the Republican's ideology. Oh, wait, isn't that de facto what the Democrats do too?

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Re: (Score:2)

by [Mashiki \(184564 \)](#)

The Republican party has long been owned by Telco's, it seems

Looks at open secrets, and finds out that telcos have predominantly even in this election year dumped money to democrats. Hmm....yep sure does look like republicans are owned by telcos. Just like the pharma industry, who've been throwing money at the democrats - especially after Trump forced through generics on a whole pile of drugs.

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It's time for "FUCK THAT SHIT!!!!" (Score:2)

by [omfglearntoplay \(1163771 \)](#)

To hell with cell towers being someone's main internet. NO WAY NO HOW!!!!!!!!!!!!

Bend over and grab your ankles.. (Score:2, Insightful)

by [Rick Schumann \(4662797 \)](#)

..here comes the wireless industry to **bigger you month after month after month and demand you thank them for the privilege**. Tell 'em to shove it up their fat asses.

Also, **THANKS, TRUMP, for appointing this piece of fucking garbage AJIT PAI**, you fat orange-haired sonofabitch.

2 hidden comments

Re: (Score:2)

by [BrianMarshall \(704425 \)](#)

Hey! No orange-shaming!

2 hidden comments

Re: (Score:1)

by [DNS-and-BIND \(461968 \)](#)

I love how fat-shaming is wrong, until you do it. Then it's OK. Weird, eh?

It's almost as if we shouldn't depend on the federal government to do everything for us, and we should do it ourselves at the state and local level. Ajit Pai is the biggest argument in favor of this, don't you think? And what's one of Trump's signature positions? Devolving power from the dangerously over-powerful federal government down to the people.

They probably can with 5G (Score:1)

by [AlanBDee \(2261976 \)](#)

Why? Right now I can choose between Comcast or Centrylink for my home internet. If you add At&t, Verizon, T-Mobile, and Sprint to that list then there are 6 carriers to choose from. We know that more competition is good.

It's one thing for Comcast and Centrylink to "compete" in one field and At&T, Verizon, T-Mobile, and Sprint to "Compete" in another. When all six are in one field then something tells me it's not going to be so easy for them all to keep treating customers like crap. Right now the ce

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Not because wireless is good enough... (Score:2)

by [QuietLagoon \(813062 \)](#)

... but because wireless is easier for the industry to deploy. It doesn't matter if customers do not agree that wireless is good enough to replace broadband. All that matters is that the industry can convince an industry-friendly FCC to rule that wireless is good enough.

Break them up! Break them up! (Score:1)

by Anonymous Coward

We need someone with guts to take a meat cleaver to these mega corporations. They have way too much power, and abuse it to the fullest extent of their capabilities. Standards are good. Lack of competition is not.

This article seems a bit short sighted. (Score:4, Interesting)

by [sunking2 \(521698 \)](#) on Wednesday September 19, 2018 @07:55PM (#57345202)

I assumed they were really talking about home 5g service competing with cable/fiber. My hopes are that it does as it'll mean in a few years most people may have at least 3 high speed internet options. I see no real need for 5g on mobile devices for most people. The cable companies are going to fight tooth and nail to try to keep them out of the home internet game. This just seems like them strengthening their position. In the end cable and mobile phone companies will all morph into some new competing industry. Not sure what it'll be called but it won't be defined by tv or phone.

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Been using mobile when traveling. (Score:2)

by [Chas \(5144 \)](#)

Have had tethering capability with my phone for a number of years now.
And it's saved me literally THOUSANDS in hotel Internet costs.

But, is it ready for prime time yet?

No.
Locational issues affecting signal strength still play heavily on it's utility.

Latency can also be an issue. I was an early adopter for Clear (which is now just Sprint) and had massive issues.

I had a tower less than a quarter mile from my location that'd give me 3 bars. Unfortunately, I was on the south face of an 8-story brick, concrete

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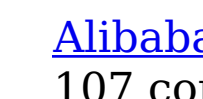
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