

Google out to spread its super-fast Internet service (Update)

February 19 2014, by Glenn Chapman



Fiber optic cables carrying Internet providers are pictured on March 20, 2013 in the Lower Manhattan area of New York

Google on Wednesday ramped up its drive to build a super-fast US Internet network in a budding challenge to the grip a handful of titans have on service.

Lessons learned and confidence gained from Google Fiber projects in

Texas, Utah, and the Kansas City region prompted the Silicon Valley technology giant to invite 34 more cities to explore the potential to build the ultra-fast networks.

"People are hungrier than ever for faster Internet, and as a result, cities across America are making speed a priority," Google Access Services vice president Milo Medin said in a blog post.

"We've long believed that the Internet's next chapter will be built on gigabit speeds, so it's fantastic to see this momentum."

Google cited letters from city leaders across the country who were adamant that high-speed internet is essential for innovation, education, and economic growth.

Medin was quick to point out that Google Fiber projects might not work out in every city invited to sign up.

"But, cities who go through this process with us will be more prepared for us or any provider who wants to build a fiber network," he said.

"We hope this news inspires more communities across America to take steps to get to a gig."

Comcast mega-deal

The news from Google come a week after Comcast unveiled plans to swallow rival Time Warner Cable in a mega-deal that triggered debate on the creation of a cable-Internet behemoth.

News of the \$45.2 billion deal uniting the largest two US cable firms raised regulatory concerns about the reach of Comcast, which owns NBCUniversal's film and television assets and is one of the largest

providers of cable Internet.

"While no single series of deployments can solve the major broadband competition problem that we face in the US—particularly in light of the announced intended consolidation of the two largest cable broadband providers—this is a positive step for a handful of communities across the country," said Sarah Morris at the New America Foundation.

Google has been gradually moving to provide Internet service on which its money-making online products depend.

Along with Google Fiber projects in Austin, Provo, and Kansas City, the California company last year announced a deal to provide free high-speed wireless Internet service at all Starbucks cafes in the United States.

Google boasts that its Starbucks Wi-Fi is as much as 10 times faster than what was available before, when it was handled by telecom titan AT&T, and that its Fiber speeds blaze up to 100 times faster than what people use currently.

Google has established a pattern of providing a low-speed version of Google Fiber free to residents, who pay one-time installation fees, and then offering options such as high-speed Internet and online television for monthly subscription rates.

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