

Canada regulator declares high-speed internet an essential service

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Canada's telecommunications regulator on Wednesday declared access to high-speed internet an essential service that must be available to all, including rural and remote areas of the world's second-largest nation by land mass.

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In addition, telecoms were ordered to provide it with their investment plans within six months to help meet this objective.

"Access to broadband internet service is vital and a basic telecommunication service all Canadians are entitled to receive," said CRTC chairman Jean-Pierre Blais.

"High quality and reliable digital connectivity is essential for the quality of life of Canadians and Canada's economic prosperity," he said.

Most of Canada's 12 million households and one million businesses already have [broadband access](#) to the internet.

But about 18 percent are underserved by dial-up or other low-speed access, which hinders their ability "to participate in the digital economy," Blais said.

Fast internet access is increasingly needed to access services such as health care, education, and banking, as well as shopping, entertainment, and social networking.

The CRTC set out in its decision that 90 percent of Canadian homes and businesses must have access to [high speed internet](#) by the end of 2021 and the remaining 10 percent within 10-15 years.

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