

Sick of your internet provider? Do some research before you jump ship

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We are lucky to live in the age of broadband internet availability just about everywhere.

In fact, most of us have choices for more than one provider.

I'm a member of several Facebook groups and our local Nextdoor neighborhood group, and not a week goes by when someone is not complaining about their [internet provider](#) and asking for recommendations for other options.

In Dallas, most of us can choose between our local phone provider (AT&T in my case) and the local cable TV provider (Spectrum).

Today, someone might be lamenting about AT&T [service](#) interruptions, and tomorrow it's just as likely to be someone sick of their experience with Spectrum.

The people want to know about their options, and in this day and age you'd think we could have our pick of half a dozen providers - but no - our broadband choices are usually still limited to those companies that have invested in networks that physically run a wire to our home.

Options will differ according to the companies that cover your area.

Some areas away from the cities will have a few more options, including some fixed wireless providers that will come mount an antenna on your

roof.

In my neighborhood, if you have AT&T and really want to change providers, you'll give Spectrum a try and vice-versa.

Just remember, most of us have bundled service for [internet](#), TV and maybe even landline connections.

If you ditch Spectrum for AT&T, you'll likely be opting for their TV service as well.

Transferring to another provider also means you'll need to learn a new DVR service and channel lineup and any recordings on your old DVR will go away when you send that box back.

Cord cutters have it easier, as they're probably just buying internet access.

Just make sure you know if there is a cap on the amount of data you can use, especially with internet-only plans.

Read the offer details before you sign up, especially if you choose one of the providers' lower-speed plans. With AT&T Fiber service, you'll get unlimited data if you opt for their \$80/month 1000Mbps plan, but if you opt for the \$60/month 100Mbps plan you're limited to one terabyte of data per month. Go over one terabyte and you'll pay \$10 for each extra 50 gigabytes of data.

Don't think you can burn through a terabyte in a month?

Netflix says an hour of HD content uses 3 gigabytes, so you can stream 11 hours of HD video per day for 30 days before you hit the cap.

Not a big deal for one or two people, but what if you have four or five heavy video streamers in your house? You might find that opting for the higher-priced plan that includes unlimited data is a better deal.

So what should you do if you want to explore your options?

Ask around. Ask your neighbors who they are using. Complain to the people on Nextdoor and see who they recommend.

If you'd like to see which companies provide internet in your area, go to broadbandnow.com and input your ZIP code.

You might see providers in your list that say they're available, but you might find out they really don't provide service or only provide service to a small number of homes in the area. It pays to do some internet research.

If you are not a heavy video streamer, you might be able to opt for just using your cell phone for your internet service, but make sure your plan has enough data available.

There are some unlimited plans, but most will allow a certain amount of data at highest speeds then slow things down for the rest of the month.

Check your plan details.

I see better times coming when our cell companies build out 5G systems that promise much faster wireless service from cell towers.

I think in three years our choices will be greater, but only time will tell if those connections will be cheaper.

In theory, not running wires to your home should help keep costs down,

but I'll believe it when I see it.

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