

Verizon grabs for Internet speed crown in new plan

November 22 2010, By PETER SVENSSON , AP Technology Writer

(AP) -- Verizon Communications Inc. is zooming past cable-company competitors by tripling the top download speed of its FiOS Internet service to 150 megabits per second, or 50 times faster than a typical DSL line.

The new speed tier announced Monday costs about \$200 per month for consumers, depending the length of the contract and whether the subscriber buys Verizon's phone service as well.

Cable TV rival [Cablevision Systems](#) Corp. has been offering speeds of 101 megabits per second for \$100 per month since last year, and [Comcast](#) Corp. is offering a similar speed to businesses. The new tier allows Verizon to claim that it has the fastest service of any major Internet provider.

Verizon gets bragging rights, but there aren't many ways for a household to take advantage of speed increase from, say, 20 megabits per second, to 150. The lower speed still allows for three or four high-definition video streams at the same time.

The [upload speed](#) on the 150-megabit service is 35 megabits per second, a speed Verizon has already been offering on a lower tier. High upload speeds can be useful for making online backups and sending massive video files.

New York-based Verizon hopes that the availability of higher speeds

will stimulate the development of applications that can take advantage of them, spokesman Bill Kula said.

Before the end of the year, Verizon plans to offer the service to small businesses, at higher rates.

FiOS is available to 12.5 million homes, mainly in the Northeast, Texas and California. However, not all of them will be able to sign up for the new high-speed service. Where Verizon introduced FiOS first, the older terminals installed in customer homes don't support the 150 megabit speed, and the company has to send out installers to replace the terminals. That's free for customers signing up for the 150-megabit service for one year.

A public-sector alternative is even faster. In September, the city-owned electrical utility in Chattanooga, Tenn., started offering Internet service at 1 gigabit per second, or six times higher than Verizon's top tier, at a cost of \$350 a month.

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