November 28, 2017

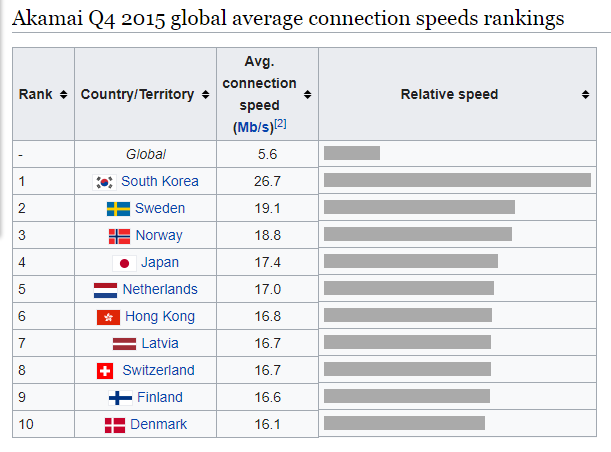
To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Katherine Shinn, and I’m a citizen of Port Angeles, WA. I’m speaking on behalf of the hundreds of millions of Americans who will be affected by the end of net neutrality.

We like to say that America is #1. We’re a juggernaut of industry, and we boast one of the highest rates of internet access in the world.

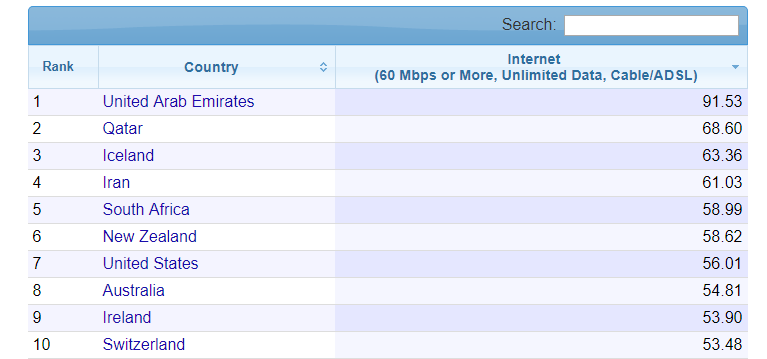


But when it comes to our internet, we’re not even in the top ten when it comes to speed…

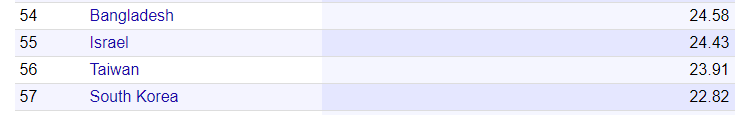


<https://www.fastmetrics.com/internet-connection-speed-by-country.php>

Even so, we’re within the top ten in terms of cost of access.



South Korea has the fastest internet in the world, and yet on average they pay significantly less than we do.



<https://www.numbeo.com/cost-of-living/prices_by_country.jsp?displayCurrency=USD&itemId=33>

We know that it’s possible to have faster, cheaper internet—other countries are doing it every day. But by cornering the market and crushing any competition, the big ISPs have us all in their clutches, and we can either deal with them or live without internet. I’m 34, so I remember what it was like before having regular access. If the world remained as it was back then, I probably wouldn’t miss it. But that’s not the world we live in now. Trying to live without internet in the 21st century is like trying to live without electricity or indoor plumbing--it’s simply not feasible. Plenty of people scoff at the idea of the internet being a necessity—at least until they try to get somewhere without a map, order tickets to anything during holiday rush, or stay on top of the news of the latest mass shooting.

A few years ago, my monthly internet was less than $40 a month. Now it’s $80, and that’s in addition to paying close to $120 a month for a smartphone with 2G of data. I can’t speak for other millennials, but at this stage in my life, I didn’t expect to be playing a game of Which Bill Am I Not Paying This Month? This is not what I imagined for myself, and since I’m powerless until I find full-time employment, I’m forced to appeal to a higher authority. (I was a librarian for five years, and I have three college degrees. Yet where I live now, I’ve applied for everything from receptionist positions to delivering sandwiches—and yes, I use the internet to do it.)

America just went through the biggest economic downturn since the Great Depression, and my generation is making 20% less money than the previous one at the same stage in life. Because of this, millennials are being blamed for killing the industries that have daisy chained together to make a suitable standard of living almost impossible. And now the ISPs want to gouge us out of even more money. I’d laugh if it wasn’t so horrible.

I’m not going to waste my time trying to appeal to their quality of mercy. If the ISPs insist on charging us more for better internet access, then we’ll be forced to do what we’ve always done: find a workaround of the system and support it with our money. We did it with Uber and AirBnB. We do it by building tiny houses and not buying diamonds. Somebody somewhere has to be clever enough to do something like that with the internet. The big ISPs might have the internet, but without our money, they’re nothing. We are tired, and we are angry, and we are clever. And there are a lot more of us than there are of them.

Respectfully,

Katherine E. Shinn, MLS