

As a broadband customer, who until a couple years ago could not get broadband service and as someone who works in the IT industry and as a computer science student, I am most troubled by the way in which broadband service providers advertise the speed of their service. For example, I currently receive broadband from Time Warner Cable. They say that my service is 7Mbps. They have even offered to "increase my speed" to 15 Mbps. What they don't mention on their site until you've started the purchasing process and dug around through various levels is the upload speed. Having a download speed of 15 Mbps doesn't do you much good when the upload speed is 512 kbps. The way network traffic works, there are packets that need to be sent back to the server acknowledging receipt of the downloaded data. If those packets are not received by the server as quickly as the server is sending the data packets, it's likely that the transmission will be slower. I think it is EXTREMELY important for broadband providers to clearly display both downstream and upstream data transfer speeds on their website. That information should be easily accessed by current and potential customers. In addition, upstream data transfer speed should be at least one quarter of the speed of the downstream transfer. That should be sufficient to provide adequate speeds for most Internet applications.