

# UNPLUGGED

With

## Starwire Technologies

*Unplugged is a column dedicated to helping educate you about the Internet and other technologies. Starwire Technologies is a local high-speed Internet provider located in Burnett County.*

Do you know how fast your Internet connection is supposed to be? Is it performing as fast as it should and does it matter? These are a few of the questions will help answer this week.

Internet speeds – also referred to as “Bandwidth” – control how fast you can perform tasks on the Internet. The faster your connection is, the less time it takes to view a web site or download an email. Tasks that take many minutes on a slow connection can finish in seconds on a fast one. Some activities, such as streaming a video, require a fast connection (DSL, Cable, or Wireless) which is called Broadband.

Bandwidth (speed) is measured in bits per second, or how many pieces of data your connection can transfer each second. Dial-up is one of the slowest forms of connecting to the Internet, and is also known as a 56k connection. The “k” in 56k stands for kilobits and is referring to how many thousands of bits per second that the connection can support. While 56k technically means 56,000 bits each second, most dial-up connections can only download at 40k or less. Faster connections might be measured in megabits, which simply replaces the “k” and means millions of bits.

Since most of us have used (or still use) dial-up, let’s compare it to some faster speeds. A common broadband speed is 512k. But what does that really mean? A 512k connection should be about 12 times faster than most dial-up connections.

The bill you get each month should tell you how fast your connection is, but is it really performing at that speed? An easy way to test it is to run a “speed test” by visiting our web site at [www.starwire.net](http://www.starwire.net). Click on the “Speed Test” button at the bottom, and then click “Begin Test”. Don’t be surprised if the results are lower than you’d expect. Often your provider only gets you 80% or less than what you are paying for.

Feel free to contact us for more information about this topic, to suggest a future topic, or to inquire about our services. Thanks for reading and stay tuned for the next edition of **Unplugged!**



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