

Time Warner has taken a PR beating in its efforts to do the right thing. I would like to offer them a suggestion.

You are not going to win the PR battle if you make usage caps an issue related to cost. There is far too large a contingency on the internet who will do their best to shout down anyone and every corporation that challenge the dogma of "free internet" or "unlimited bandwidth". You will have folks like Saul Hansell at the NY Times who doesn't seem to realize how often he contradicts himself [writing articles](#) that try to support the notion that all bandwidth is equal, and cheap.

Saul ignores the fact that any person or company can buy a server from any hosting company to get direct access to unlimited pay as you go bandwidth, at very low commercial rates. He cites the fact that an ISP would pay \$1k or more per 100mbs, without questioning the value. Then goes on to suggest that its acceptable to share the same amount of bandwidth delivered to the home 500 ways. Which of course is another way of saying that "you can have as much bandwidth as you want, as long as you don't use it"

Saul says that if the consumer does use it, the ISP just "splits the nodes" as many times as needed till consumers get the bandwidth they need. Of course this doesn't take into account the differences between upstream (which is more limited for technical reasons) and downstream, but let's set that aside as not being an issue. The natural maximum amount of noding is to the point where there is a 1 to 1 ratio between node and home. At that point the consumer has a link to the network that is not much different than that of the ISP that Saul said was paying \$1k per month per 100mbs. Should the consumer pay \$1k per month for 100mbs of switched bandwidth ?

The difference of course is the quality of service required. The ISP needs the full 100mbs available to it 100pct of the time. Without the certainty of availability, it has no way to reliably offer service to its customers. The presumption is that consumers don't require any specific level of quality of service for their internet needs.

That is where the cable companies are getting their PR approach wrong. They know what happens to their customer service lines if TV service is interrupted for even the shortest periods of time. Look at the big to do made about the transition to Digital TV. Politicians were counting lost votes from consumers who couldn't get their convertors for their analog TVs. People get upset when they can't watch TV.

Netizens are just as passionate about their internet. Not only do they want access, but they want it fast. Unfortunately for 99pct of the vocal minority of netizens, those who post all over the net and start websites about the importance of unlimited bandwidth, they think bigger numbers mean faster access. It doesn't. They just don't know it. Firefox with too many tabs open on an Airbook will slow how fast a website comes up or your gmail loads more than whether or not you have a 2mbs, 10mbs or 100mbs connection. The size of your Outlook database on a PC will impact how quickly your new email downloads and is available for you to reply to than the speed of your internet connection.

It won't be easy, but the battle ground has to switch from amount of bandwidth and cost, to performance .

Consumers understand that there is a huge difference between quality and quantity. Consumers understand that realworld speed comes at a premium price. We see it with our toll tags. We see it in carpool lanes. We see it with Fedex and UPS. Amazon gives us delivery options with different costs. We as consumers make judgements every day about whether or not we want to pay for better performance.

The cable companies need to stop making this about gigabytes per month, and make it all about performance. You need to start making it clear that usage caps SERVE AND PROTECT the performance of your customers. That you want to offer your customers the fastest access to your favorite websites at the lowest possible cost. That your network is finetuned to optimize the performance for 99pct of your customers. That you want to offer streaming video that doesn't buffer. That you want to allow for fast downloads. That can't happen when a few people take advantage of the network. Let people know you have special offerings for those who use corporate level quantities of bandwidth and that usage caps are in place to identify those people.

I like usage caps because there is nothing that pisses me off more than the network slowing down when I'm trying to get work done. I'm a consumer that places a premium on quality over quantity. I'm one of the 99pct of your consumers that you are putting 2nd to the 1pct. The vocal minority that probably don't turn their lights off and then wonder why the electric bill is so high.

Focus your message to us. Those who care about quality of service.