

UNIT 6 – New Technology

Reading 1

Skills:

- Details
- Associate information
- Make connections

Getting started: What kind of internet services have you had?

SPACEX'S STARLINK SATELLITE INTERNET SPEEDS IMPRESS EARLY BETA TESTERS



Starlink is a satellite internet constellation being constructed by SpaceX (company founded by Elon Musk) whose aim is to provide satellite Internet access. Currently, Starlink is launching beta tests of their satellite internet service, and the results are promising. It's still early days, but one beta user posted a speed test showing Starlink delivering a 174Mbps download speed in rural Montana while **latency** averaged at 33 milliseconds. This past weekend, test kits for SpaceX's satellite internet service

began arriving to the first public beta users and many are reporting that the service is indeed fast. "Starlink is a game changer, before I was getting 0.5-12mb/s (Mbps) now I get 100-160mb/s," wrote one test user.

Lucky consumers who received an invite to the Starlink public beta have been posting their early impressions on Reddit after installing the satellite dish system at their homes. "Streaming 1440p and 4K with zero **buffering** on YouTube," wrote one user who previously relied on AT&T to supply 8 to 10Mbps download speeds. One user also successfully tested Starlink within a national forest—which normally has no cell phone reception. "Works beautifully. I did a real time video call and some tests," the user posted while noting the Starlink dish works best with a clear view of the sky.

On the downside, the upload rate for Starlink is far lower with users posting speed test scores showing the service reaching between 33Mbps to 15Mbps. Another area where Starlink can struggle is sustaining an uninterrupted internet connection, which is necessary for online gaming or voice calls. "My kids said games disconnect every 2 to 3 minutes. Also, they can't even log in into (the game) Star Citizen," wrote one test user based in Idaho. "YouTube and streaming works great. Wi-Fi calling works, but calls drop. The longest uninterrupted call was 21 minutes."

The reasons may be due to satellite coverage. Currently, SpaceX is only operating about 800 satellites to power Starlink; the goal is to launch thousands more to supply higher internet speeds and reduce the latency. The company is targeting a global launch for Starlink next year.

**Adapted from <https://www.pcmag.com/news/spacexs-starlink-satellite-internet-speeds-impress-early-beta-testers>*

Glossary:

- **Latency** /'leɪtənsi/: the delay before data begins to move after it has been sent an instruction to do so.
- **Buffering**: Buffering is something that occurs when downloading a certain amount of data before playing a video. Possibly the most common form of buffering occurs when your internet speed is too slow to download the amount of data needed. In this scenario, your device will buffer the data for the video and then begin playing it when there is enough data downloaded to prevent lag in the stream

Complete the columns. Write down the positive aspects regarding Starlink’s internet service, and also the problems it presents.

Positive Aspects	Negative Aspects

What do you think?

Are you happy with your current internet provider?