

The Speed of Things

Some years ago, I attended a conference and heard a person comment about the speeds offered by various Internet service providers. “It’s as though you read the label on a package of ground beef that said, ‘May contain up to 1 pound of beef.’

The numbers that we’re offered aren’t reliable and, furthermore, don’t tell the whole story. A basic search on Google for “internet speed test” brings you to this widget:

Internet speed test

Check your internet speed in under 30 seconds. The speed test usually transfers less than **40 MB of data**, but may transfer more data on fast connections.

To run the test, you'll be connected to [Measurement Lab \(M-Lab\)](#) and your IP address will be shared with them and processed by them in accordance with their [privacy policy](#). M-Lab conducts the test and publicly publishes all test results to promote internet research. Published information includes your IP address and test results, but doesn't include any other information about you as an internet user.

[About](#) [RUN SPEED TEST](#)

Using Xfinity, here’s what I got:

Internet speed test ×

385.2 Mbps download	10.4 Mbps upload
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Latency: 26 ms
Server: New York

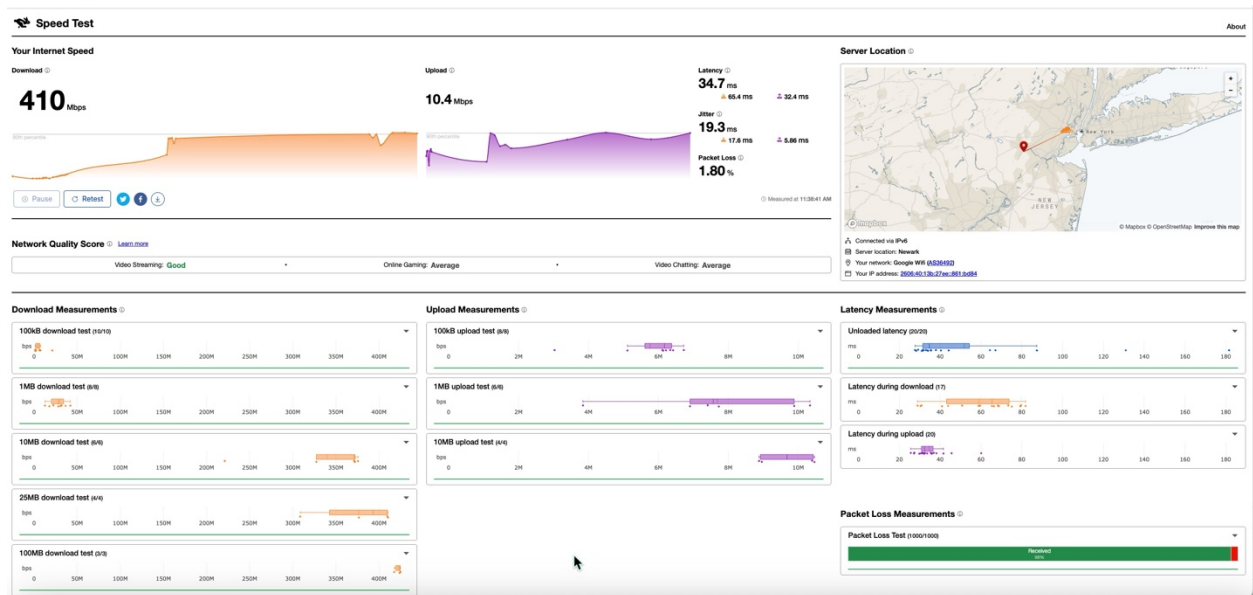
Your Internet connection is very fast.

Your Internet connection should be able to handle multiple devices streaming HD videos, video conferencing, and gaming at the same time.

[LEARN MORE](#) [TEST AGAIN](#)

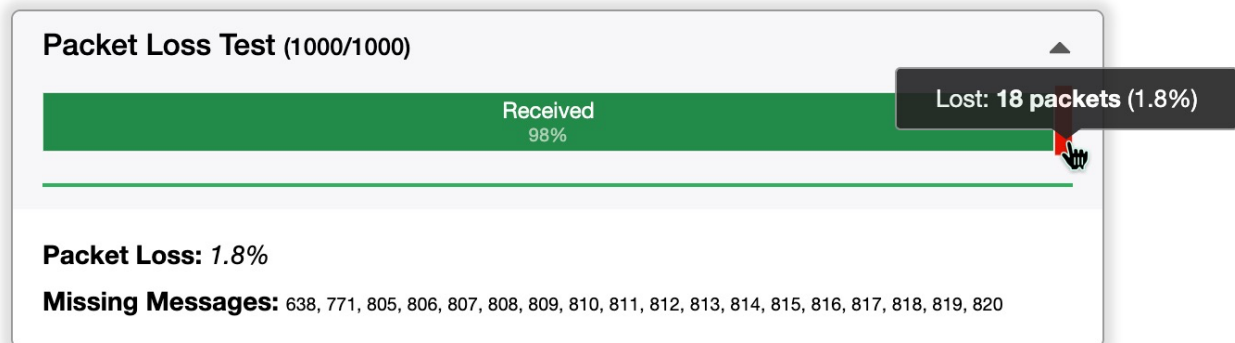
[Feedback](#)

That's pretty good but doesn't provide enough detail to show where there might be troubles. A new kid on the block from CloudFlare is a step in the right direction with more detail, but not too much:



That little red segment in the lower right showed that there was a disruption in the connection.

Packet Loss Measurements ⓘ



It seems like a small amount, 1.8%, but that's a lot when you're in a Zoom meeting. I've been trying to track this down for several weeks. It doesn't occur all the time, but, when it does, it messes up a bunch of stuff.