

## **Qwest doubles top broadband speed in some cities to keep up with cable**

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(AP) -- Qwest Communications International Inc. is doubling its top Internet download speeds in some areas to keep up with the offerings of cable companies.

The phone company said Monday it is introducing a plan with download speeds of up to 40 megabits per second and upload speeds of up to 20 mbps in parts of 15 cities, including Denver; Phoenix and Tucson, Ariz.; Salt Lake City; Seattle and Vancouver, Wash.; and Minneapolis/St. Paul.

It costs \$110 per month for the first year when combined with home phone service.

Qwest aims to add more areas in the next few months. It's also offering higher upload speeds to existing customers in the upgraded areas: up to 5 mbps for \$5 per month. Higher upstream speeds are useful for online backups, sharing of large files and video conferencing.

Cable companies are rolling out a new cable-modem technology this year, allowing them to offer download speeds of 50 mbps, and in some places, even more.

To close the speed gap, Qwest is deploying a new DSL technology called VDSL2. However, it works only in areas where Qwest has already upgraded its network by running optical fiber closer to homes, shortening the distance the data signal has to run over old copper phone lines to reach a home.

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In those areas, it has been offering a maximum download speed of 20 mbps and uploads at less than 1 mbps. In areas without extra fiber, the top download speed is 7 mpbs.

Qwest is the country's seventh-largest provider of broadband, with 2.9 million customers.

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