Register Now | Sign In | E-mail preferences

NEWS          ENTERTAINMENT          HOOKEM.COM          CLASSIFIEDS          CARS          HOMES          JOBS

| HOME | A-LIST | EVENTS | MUSIC | MOVIES | TV | FOOD/DRINK | ARTS | REC | BIZ DIRECTORY | BLOGS | PHOTOS/VIDEO | DEALSWARM | CUSTOMER SERVICE |

ADVERTISE

**What are you looking for?**   **Where is it? City, State or zip**   **When is it? Tonight, Date**   SEARCH   [search box]   SEARCH

○ **Events**   ○ **Venues**   ○ **Movies**   ○ **Restaurants**   ○ **Performers**    **+ Add Listing**   ● Site ○ Web ○ Archive   Web Search by **YAHOO!**
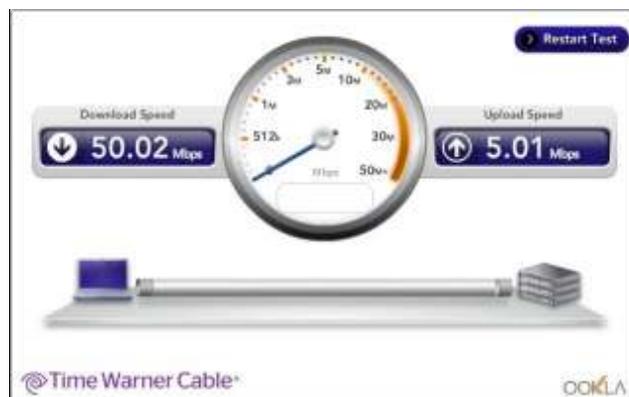
**DIGITAL SAVANT**
360 blogs

**Share**

4

0

# Review: Time Warner Cable's Road Runner Wideband service

By Omar L. Gallaga | Thursday, September 1, 2011, 10:12 AM





**Time Warner's own speed test and the one at speedtest.net had different ideas of the speed of Road Runner Wideband.**

**Omar L. Gallaga** writes about technology culture for the Austin American-Statesman. He's worked for the American-Statesman since 1997 and edited Technopolis, the newspaper's personal tech section, and ¡ahora sí!, Austin's Spanish-language newspaper. He's currently a contributor to NPR's "All Tech Considered" segment, which airs Mondays on "All Things Considered." He's been a writer and performer with Austin's award-winning Latino Comedy Project, and is a contributing writer for Television Without Pity. He writes a comic strip, "Space Monkeys!" with his brother, Pablo, and lives in New Braunfels with his wife and three technologically savvy cats.

**A note on commenting**

You can comment on entries, but they will not be posted until they are reviewed by the blogger.

**RSS feed**

If you use an RSS reader, here is the feed for this blog: XML.

▶ Learn more about RSS.
▶ A FAQ on Web logs

**What's on this page?**

The entry titled "Review:

Before we get to the review, a bit of breaking news we just got from Time Warner Cable. Road Runner Extreme and Standard customers are about to get a speed boost. The company says Internet service speeds are being raised from 7 Mbps download / 512 Kbps upload to 10 Mbps download / 1 Mbps for Standard customers and from 20 Mbps download / 2 Mbps upload to 30 Mbps download / 5 Mbps upload for Road Runner Extreme customers at no additional cost. The changes have already gone into effect.

The company says that there's no capping catch: the new speeds are still provided with no usage capping/broadband metering. Wideband service also has no usage limits.

Something to think about as you read our Wideband review below:

---

I've been a customer of Time Warner Cable's Road Runner Internet service since the late '90s and, even on the mid-tier Standard service I've been on, one complaint I've rarely had is speed. Downloads have typically been solid, video games and even HD video streaming has worked fine for me and the price has stayed consistent (about $50 a month without any other TWC services bundled in).

**LATEST PHOTO GALLERIES »**

  

**Roger Daltrey**   **Celebrity photos, October 2011**   **Zombie make-up how-to guide**

**LATEST AP ENTERTAINMENT HEADLINES »**

   Hollywood hacking case victims include Johansson

▶ Former Mich. governor to host Current TV talk show

▶ Correction: BC-US--Celeb-Birthdays

▶ Defense drops claim Jackson swallowed fatal dose

▶ Universal drops plan for 'Tower Heist' VOD release

Time Warner Cable's
Road Runner Wideband
service."

**Categories**
- ACL Festival
- Applications
- Austin
- Baby-daddy
- Computers
- Food
- Gadgets
- Internet
- Movies & DVDs
- Phones
- Podcasts
- Shopping
- SXSW
- SXSW 2009
- SXSW 2010
- SXSW 2011
- SXSW 2012
- TV
- Videogames

**Blog Roll**
- Girlstart
- Stuck in Customs
- Joystiq
- Austin Bloggers
- Videogamey.com
- Austin Wireless Alliance
- It's Just This Little Chromium Switch Here
- Penny Arcade
- Slashdot
- South by Southwest Interactive
- All Tech Considered
- Dubious Quality
- Engadget

**Archives**
- October 12, 2011
- October 11, 2011
- October 10, 2011
- October 7, 2011
- October 5, 2011
- October 4, 2011
- October 3, 2011
- More archives...

**Statesman Blogs**
- All Ablog Austin
- Anders Meanders
- Austin Golf: Backspin
- Austin Legal
- Bevo Beat
- Bohl Games
- Charity Chat
- City and County Beat
- Design Austin
- Editors' Notes
- Fantasy Island
- First Reading
- Focal Point
- Formula Austin
- Golden's Nuggets
- Hill Country Rambler
- Homeroom
- Knittin' Kitten
- Mama Drama
- No Limits
- Of Sacred and Secular
- Postcards
- Salsa Verde
- Salud
- Season for Caring
- ShortCuts
- Somos Austin
- Statesman Business Blog
- The 12th Word at A&M
- The Blotter
- The Goods
- The lowdown on higher education
- The Reader
- Up the Ladder
- Varsity News
- Weather Watch
- WillCo Wired

In July, Time Warner introduced "Wideband" Internet in the Austin area, which promises speeds of up to 50 Mbps, more than twice as fast as the service I was getting. Time Warner installed the service in my New Braunfels home for a trial, and while the installation was quick and professional, the first week with Wideband was rocky. The new cable modem that was installed, a Ubee DDW3611, doubles as a wireless router, creating its own WiFi network. What the technicians didn't tell me during the installation was that the router creates its own settings for the network. They did give me a network password that allowed me to use the new WiFi, which was actually faster than my single-band WiFi-N router's network.

One of those settings, "Enable flood control," was turned on. Until I figured out what was going on, I spent a week wondering why the network would suddenly slow to a crawl or become unavailable when I tried to multitask on the web, streaming music and opening up RSS feeds at the same time. The router thought that flurry of Internet activity was a hacking attack and began cutting off outside connections, a problem I never had with my previous service.

Once that option was disabled, things got back to normal. Download speeds, according to several speed tests I did were consistently on the 35-50 Mbps range, according to Time Warner's speed test website and other independent speed test sites I used. (Not surprisingly, TWC's speedtest reported consistently higher speeds than other speed tests did.)

To be honest, I only noticed the speed difference when downloading large files or with multiple people in the house streaming movies or music. Slow web sites are still slow if the logjam is on the other end of that connection and your computer's processing power, memory and place in the network are still going to be big factors in the speeds you get, no matter the download speeds. In a home with an older WiFi network, devices that aren't connected by wires aren't going to see huge advantages in the increased Internet speeds.

Even in those instances, there were still hiccups. My wife's more sensitive secure line to work was sometimes interrupted when we were both online at the same time. Calling the support line at Time Warner revealed that both times it happened, there were network interruptions happening in our area. (One of those times, we were told there were "Packet loss issues" in our hood). On at least a half dozen occasions in a month and a half, the modem had to be completely restarted for us to continue using the Internet.

These instances were infrequent but troubling given that I rarely had problems with the regular Road Runner service.

Where I did notice a huge difference, though, was in upload speeds. My previous upload speeds were about .5 Mbps, so slow that uploading large files frequently bogged down the entire home network. With Wideband, I got upload speeds that were a significant improvement. A set of three 50-megabyte files that used to take about 25 minutes to upload to Dropbox.com now took less than five minutes. I don't know if that's a testament to Wideband's great upload speeds or an indictment of the ridiculously slow upload speeds on Road Runner's lower-speed tiers.

Wideband costs $99 a month (or $4 more if you don't have other Time Warner Cable services). For artists and video producers who need to upload large files or small businesses with several employees online at the same time, it may be worth the expense. But for home users with typical Internet needs, it may be overkill. Upgrading your WiFi network, making sure your computers aren't too slow to take advantage of Internet speeds and looking into a less pricey tier of service (somewhere in the $40-$60 range) might better fit your needs, especially given the new Road Runner speeds for Extreme and Standard tiers we listed at the top of this review.

Permalink | Comments (10) | Post your comment  Categories: Austin, Internet

Comments

When commenting, we ask that you keep things civil and abide by our Visitor Agreement. To report comment abuse, click here.

By Pat
September 13, 2011 1:04 PM | Link to this

Jason above, please tell me what you did. I have my 2 computers connected directly to the new modem and web pages load super slow. Time Warner did a speed test and said everything was fine of course. Some websites don't load at all and some are extremely slow. Slower than my previous Roadrunner Standard. I haven't even begun to figure out how to connect it to my time capsule until I figure out why it won't load web pages correctly. I did connect it to my TC once and told me I had to choose between a shared IP and NAT. Never seen that before.

By Jason
September 10, 2011 2:47 PM | Link to this

I have TWC and honestly in the 5 years I have been in this house I have had two times my internet had problems. I recently upgraded to RR extreme. I had a hell of a time getting the modem setup, even the tier 3 support didn't know how to get the modem setup correctly to work with my apple time capsule. The modem they gave me was the motorola surfboard. Once I got it all setup so I could use my own router, things have been flawless. Even over wireless. Via TW speediest or even speediest.net, I got a pegged 30Mbps/down and 5Mbps/up. I was connected for 9 hours the other day to my works VPN and never had a single disconnect or hiccup.

By Jake
September 2, 2011 7:39 AM | Link to this

I also had a horrible experience with their garbage Ubee modem and went back to the regular service. If you are forced to use that garbage hardware it's not worth it.

By Dweezil
September 2, 2011 7:31 AM | Link to this

"(One of those times, we were told there were "Packet loss issues" in our hood)."

This is the grammar of a modern journalist? geez

I hate TWC and have for years. I've been using AT&T with very few problems, though I haven't run a speed test (not that heavy of a user). However, I do notice speed fluctuations during the school year that don't occur in summer. I assume all those UT students added to the pool of users must bog the system down somewhat.

By Stuck with TW
September 1, 2011 11:46 PM | Link to this

Time Warner is evil....

They bought off many apartment complexes years ago when Grande was getting started, so they're the only option in the richer parts of town. (TW skipped the poorer areas of course.) TW gets to charge higher prices in the market overall because of this monopolistic tactic.

If you actually have the option to get Grande, not only will you pay less but you'll be supporting a regional company that's had to endure unfair competition.

By tim
September 1, 2011 10:14 PM | Link to this

In some areas Grande communications has a cable modem service that works very well. Just did a speedtest.net test and got 28.71 download and 5.46 upload on my laptop. It always seems to be a bit faster with a wired connection.

By **Omar Gallaga**
September 1, 2011 5:28 PM | Link to this

The Ubee modem I was issued CAN be configured locally, I just didn't know that when they did the installation. They gave me an SSID and password to use the WiFi, but not an admin password for the modem/router. Once I figured out how to get that (I had to search through some forums and do some Googling), I was able to change any setting I wanted to, including "Enable Flood Control."

By Jim
September 1, 2011 4:59 PM | Link to this

One of my friends has a TWC combination Ubee modem and router, and like yours, it cannot be administered locally...TWC must do it. The problem is that TWC delivers it with the lowest possible security setting, WEP. My friend had to call (and wait) until someone at TWC finally understood that we wanted to change the security from WEP to WPA2. It took about an hour overall.

WEP has been broken. Why does TWC (and Verizon FiOs, too) deliver a router with security that can be compromised?

By LSM
September 1, 2011 3:38 PM | Link to this

To a good extent I agree with Keith.

However the alternatives are even less attractive.

TWC is a true monopoly, in Austin anyway, no competition whatsoever...

Do you hear me/us Austin City Council ?

By keith
September 1, 2011 2:15 PM | Link to this

TWC blows chunks - they will either tell you their network is fine and it is your equipment that is the problem, OR they will call you a liar that you are having problems with their service. I've even had them tell me they would disconnect my call if I did not change my tone, and I hadn't even changed my tone.....not to mention putting you on one contract when you signed up for something else, and then telling you that you are SOL when your contract expires 6 mo early.....they're definately a company to stay away from

Post a comment

Commenting guidelines

Name:

E-mail*:

Remember me? ◯Yes  ◉No

Comments: (500 Characters)

Post

*HTML not allowed in comments. Your e-mail address **is required**. Visitor agreement

**A-LIST**
Latest photos
A-List archive
Your A-List
Your A-List winners
**EVENTS**
Events search
Artists search
Suggest an event
Holidays
Comedy
Visitors guide: This is Austin
ACL
SXSW
Republic of Texas Biker Rally
**MUSIC**
Upcoming shows
Artists search
Soundcheck360 music player
Reviews
ACL
SXSW
Concert series
Latest AP music news
Gary Dinges
Austin Music Source Blog
**MOVIES**
Now playing
Area theaters
SXSW
Latest AP movies news
John DeFore
Austin Movie Blog
**TELEVISION**
TV listings
Latest AP TV news
Dale Roe
TV Blog
**ARTS**
Arts events
Reviews
Out & About 500
Austin Arts: Seeing Things Blog

**FOOD/DRINK**
Restaurant inspections
Restaurant reservations
Dining guide
Coupons
Beer, Wine & Spirits
Happy hours
Cocktail recipes
Dining At Home
Recipes
Addie Broyles
Mike Sutter
Pat Beach
Folklore Blog
Liquid Austin Blog
Relish Austin Blog
**RECREATION**
Recreation events
Pam LeBlanc
Brom Hoban
Fit City Blog
**SPAS/SALONS**
Search for spas/salons
**BLOGS**
Austin Arts: Seeing Things
Austin Movie Blog
Austin Music Source
Digital Savant
Fit City
Forklore
It's Always Funny in Austin
Liquid Austin
Out & About
Relish Austin
Road Rash
Socially Awkward: My Life as Bobby Bones
The M.O.
TV Blog
Your A-List
All staff blogs
Austin-area bloggers
**PHOTOS/VIDEO**
Photos
Video
Interactives
**DEALSWARM**

**WATERCOOLER**
Horoscopes
Find Five
Lottery
Crossword
Sudoku
Games
Puzzles
Comics
Personals
**BIZ DIRECTORY**
Find/rate a business
Auto repair in Austin, TX
Carpet cleaners in Austin, TX
Dentists in Austin, TX
Doctors in Austin, TX
Electricians in Austin, TX
Employment in Austin, TX
Event planners in Austin, TX
General contractors in Austin, TX
Health clubs in Austin, TX
Home inspectors in Austin, TX
House cleaning in Austin, TX
Landscapers in Austin, TX
Mortgage companies in Austin, TX
Movers in Austin, TX
Painters in Austin, TX
Preschools in Austin, TX
Plumbers in Austin, TX
Real estate agents in Austin, TX
Remodeling in Austin, TX
Roofers in Austin, TX
Travel agencies in Austin, TX
Tree service in Austin, TX
Vets in Austin, TX
**MOBILE**
Austin360
Statesman
iPhone application

**NEWS**
Local news
Virtual Capitol
Business
Opinion
Life
Sports
Longhorns
High school football
Weather
Traffic
Photos/Video
**CUSTOMER SERVICE**
Site map
Contact us
Member center
E-mail newsletters
Subscribe to the Statesman
Subscribe to the e-Edition
Subscriber services
Where to buy the Statesman
Buy photos/pages
Readers panel
Reader rewards
Careers at the Statesman
Internships
Newspapers in Education
Inside Line
News tips

**CLASSIFIEDS**
Cars
Homes
Jobs
Find Austin Jobs
Merchandise
**ADVERTISE**
Print
Online
Classifieds (print/online)
eTearsheets
View newspaper ads
**MARKETING**
Community Development
Marketing
Contests
DoGood
Events
Glossy
Concert series
Readers panel
Special sections
**AFFILIATED SITES**
Ahora Si
Hookem.com
PolitiFact Texas
Bastrop Advertiser
Cedar Park Citizen
Lake Travis View
Leander Ledger
Pflugerville Pflag
Round Rock Leader
Smithville Times
Westlake Picayune

**ACAP** ENABLED

COXMEDIA™