

Price Difference of DSL Vs. Cable

Contributed By: Tom McNamara

Introduction

While cable Internet generally offers higher speeds than DSL (Digital Subscriber Line), you may not need all of that extra bandwidth. If you're comparing the two products solely on price, there are several other factors you need to take into consideration.

DSL Pricing Basics

In general, DSL is the lower-cost option, but this comes with some caveats. First of all, most of these services require a pre-existing phone line. Some of them provide Internet access to people without land-line phones, but this increases the monthly fee.

Contracts and Price Hikes

Second, one must usually sign up for a minimum one-year contract for DSL, and breaking this contract early can cost hundreds of dollars in termination fees. Some DSL providers will even increase their monthly subscription costs while you are under the contract.

Installation Fees

Many DSL providers will also charge you for your DSL modem (although the cost is usually very low), and charge another fee for installation--even if you do it yourself. Cable modems are almost always installed in your home or business by technicians. Although this ensures a proper connection, sometimes it's difficult to coordinate with their field technicians.

Price Trade-offs

While DSL can be much cheaper than cable Internet, it can also be much slower. Although a given DSL provider may charge as little as \$15 a month, this connection may be as slow as 512 kilobytes per second (KB/s). This is much faster than dial-up, but it's 10 to 15 times slower than the speeds cable Internet can bring.

Distance Issues

DSL availability is more limited by distance than cable. You may not be able to get DSL at all if you are too far away from their central offices (where your line would connect up to the Internet). Check for availability before making detailed plans.