

# Tips on choosing an internet package in South Africa

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With a wealth of Internet options available to South Africans, getting access to the Internet at home could be a daunting task when not knowing what to look for. This is why consumers should take extra care in understanding their needs and requirements before choosing an Internet package.



I suggest that consumers follow the guidelines below to help them choose an Internet package that suits their needs:

## 1. Mobile broadband vs fixed-line ADSL

Before making a decision on whether or not to go with mobile broadband or fixed-line ADSL, assess your Internet needs. Do you download content frequently? Do you travel regularly for work and need Internet access on the go? Once you have a clearer idea of your needs, you'll be better equipped to choose the right offering. Here are a few things to keep in mind when making your decision:

- ADSL runs on a fixed line whereas mobile broadband, referred to as 3G, runs wirelessly from a mobile tower.
- Although mobile broadband is convenient, the quality of the connection can at times be compromised as it is reliant on the proximity of the nearest cellular tower, as well as the number of people using that same tower to connect.
- ADSL bandwidth is significantly cheaper, making uncapped options viable. The connection is more stable than mobile broadband, which allows better quality and, sometimes, depending on your line speed choice, faster Internet.
- Mobile broadband allows you to access the Internet on the go, making it a convenient option for regular travellers.
- ADSL users will be able to enjoy the convenience of a wireless connection by setting up a secure Wi-Fi zone in their homes. All that is required is a wireless router, which will allow you to have Wi-Fi Internet throughout your home and will also allow you to have more than one device connected to your wireless router.

## 2. Uncapped or capped internet?

An Uncapped ADSL option essentially allows you to have access to as much Internet as you like at a set monthly cost.

Uncapped Internet has its perks and, for those who access the Internet regularly, it may be a good choice. Uncapped allows you more access to international content and will also allow you to enjoy quality video streaming and uploading images without the cost involved. That said, a capped option is well suited to those who tend to only use the Internet to check emails and occasionally browse.

## 3. Internet line speeds and quality of the network

Whether you use the Internet for a small/home office or for personal reasons, such as social networking, posting images or gaming, the speeds of your connection will dictate how fast your browsing experience is. South African fixed-line speeds range from up to 1Mbps to 10Mbps, with speeds of 20 and 40Mbps launching commercially soon.

## 4. Customer service

Customer service is essential to the success of a business and also plays a big role in an individual's personal Internet experience.

Customers should look at whether their chosen ISP offers technical support and service not only through a call centre, but also through social media platforms, a website and face-to-face support.

## 5. Redundancy

In today's society, having a failed Internet connection is not an option, which is why users need to ensure that their chosen ISP has a stable network to minimise downtime. MWEB's national backbone comprises of two 40Gbps fibre rings and 13 core nodes so it can reroute its subscribers' traffic should a particular network point come under pressure. The MWEB network is also connected to two major international undersea cables and has enough capacity on both cables. In an event of any networks going offline, the international cables will kick in allowing ADSL subscribers not to be severely affected.

## 6. Throttling

Many ISPs are facing ever-increasing strain on their network infrastructure as they cannot keep up with the high demand of bandwidth. This is why they have rolling window thresholds in place, which means if consumers reach their maximum download speed they will be moved to a lower priority until their usage falls below a standardised threshold. Your speed is dependent on the network capacity.

MWEB never throttles as it believes that its customers deserve the very best internet experience.

## 7. Value-added services

Consider whether your ISP offers any added services when signing with them. Other than a robust product range at a competitive price, users should look at whether their chosen ISP has additional subscriber benefits, such as access to free wi-fi, website hosting packages, cloud storage and virus and spam protection.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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