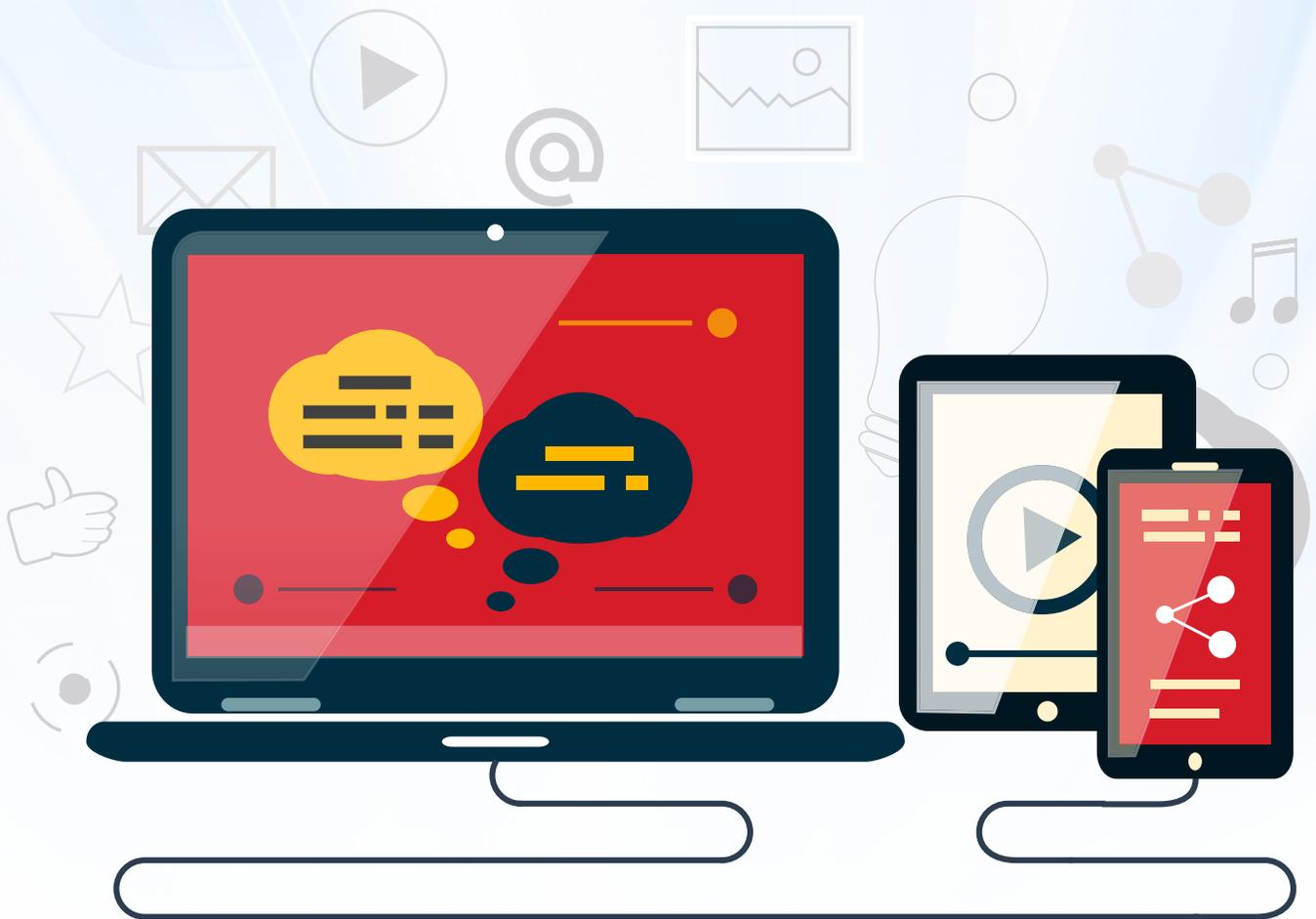


7

THINGS TO CONSIDER
WHEN SELECTING AN
INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDER
FOR YOUR BUSINESS



Find out how Cox Business Can Help Make
Your Business More Competitive - [Click Here](#)

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Internet service is the heart of any business today, powering everything from telephone service to videoconferences. Because so much of your business depends on a reliable, fast internet connection, it's important that you choose the best internet service for your environment. With several different options, though, professionals can sometimes feel overwhelmed by the technical jargon.

Whether you're starting a new business or considering making an internet provider switch, the more information you have, the better prepared you'll be to make the right choice. This guide will walk you through the different options to better prepare yourself to make decisions about your internet service.

Cable vs. DSL

When it comes to internet speeds, cable dominates, providing a speed and reliability not found with DSL. Companies like Cox Business offer high-speed internet to businesses through robust local area networks, offering speeds of up to 150 Mbps. Cable is often a better choice for businesses

because data is transmitted through cable lines that were designed specifically to transmit data. DSL, on the other hand, sends data over twisted pair cabling, a technology that was originally developed for voice.

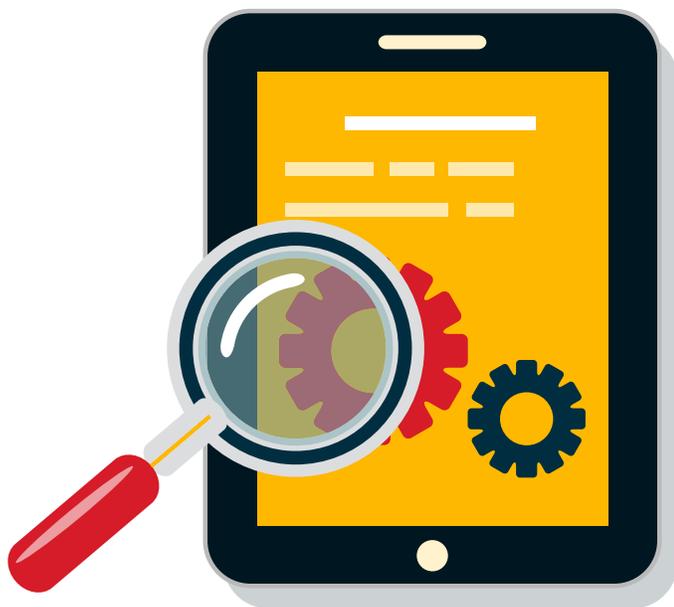


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While DSL has improved in recent years, it still lags behind cable in speed and reliability. As businesses increasingly depend on the internet for core operations, this has become an appealing feature. As DSL has improved, so has cable internet, offering unprecedented speeds that are perfect for everything from webinars to phone calls. A slow connection in the middle of an important videoconference can not only be inconvenient, but it can be humiliating, making a business look far less professional than they'd likely prefer.

Wireless vs. Wired

In choosing an internet service, one of the main decisions businesses face today is whether to go wireless. With so many employees and visitors working from mobile



devices, wireless functionality brings with it a mobility and convenience not offered by wired connections. If an employee needs peace and quiet to focus, he can move to an enclave or conference room with a laptop and keep working. Visiting clients can connect to their email from your lobby or conference room, giving you the opportunity to provide first-class customer service. If you don't offer this service, you'll likely find your receptionist is having to regularly say "no" to clients who step forward to ask about Wi-Fi while waiting.

Even with the popularity of mobile devices, however, many businesses still choose to employ wired LAN connections for office workstations. Wired connections are often faster and more reliable than Wi-Fi, which can vary depending on how far users are from the equipment. In some cases, offices focus on Wi-Fi in conference rooms, lobbies, and other shared areas while equipping each office for a wired connection.

Customer-Based Wi-Fi

Hospitality businesses are rapidly realizing that free Wi-Fi is no longer a perk, it's a necessity. Customers will choose to frequent a location based on the speed and convenience of its free Wi-Fi, which means businesses must offer these services to remain competitive. If your business serves the public, you'll be able to provide free



Wi-Fi as part of your amenities to attract customers into your establishment. Medical practices and restaurants find this service especially beneficial, since customers often linger for long periods of time in these places.

When deciding whether to offer free Wi-Fi to customers, consider the ROI on implementing the service. A restaurant or coffee shop may decide that free Wi-Fi causes guests to linger for hours, taking up tables that could be frequented by paying customers. But not offering free Wi-Fi could result in a business losing customers to competitors who offer the service. This pressure to compete will frequently lead a business to cave and at least offer free Wi-Fi with each purchase.

Once you've decided to offer Wi-Fi in your establishment, commit fully to the service. Your Wi-Fi should be reliable enough that your customers will consider it worth coming into your business. Fast Wi-Fi is part of the overall environment of a business, leading customers to choose that location for business meetings or simply to get away from the office. Sluggish, flaky Wi-Fi will only force customers to pick up their devices and walk out, leaving for one of a business's rivals.

Voice Services

Thanks to Voice over IP (VoIP) technology, the line between telephony and computers is vanishing, with businesses now able to access features that weren't previously available. When you choose an IP-based phone setup, you'll have the flexibility that comes with moving conversations over data lines rather than traditional voice lines.



Businesses can seamlessly route calls to workers' smartphones, letting them take calls while on the road or at home, as well as in the office. This can give even the smallest business the appearance of being a much larger enterprise.

One of the best things about IP-based telephony is its scalability. As an organization grows, it can often feel challenged to keep up with that growth. With IP voice services, a business can dramatically expand its team without incurring a large additional expense. VoIP also satisfies today's disaster recovery concerns, providing a cloud functionality that can usually continue without interruption even in the worst of disasters.

Technical Support

Businesses are increasingly outsourcing technology operations to outside providers, allowing them to reduce technology spending by not requiring on-site staff. Today's ISPs provide support that goes well beyond troubleshooting problems with your service. You'll have access to 24/7/365 tech support with your business-class internet service by phone or email,

which means if any of your employees have problems connecting, they can contact a knowledgeable service representative who can walk the employee through each step toward resolution.

In addition to one-on-one support, Cox Business Internet gives each customer access to a full suite of helpful articles on a variety of technical topics. Through the ISP's website, businesses can go through a step-by-step guide to help troubleshoot any problems they're having without calling for help.



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If a business is having problems with its equipment, there are multiple drop-off service locations to allow someone to conveniently deliver the equipment for repair.

Fast internet means you can also be inventive in the methods you use for providing in-house support. If your business has multiple locations, you'll no longer have to dispatch technicians to travel to different buildings when a user has an issue that can't be resolved by your ISP. Through video chat or instant messaging, your capable software technicians can work with users across the globe to walk them through issues. Windows Remote Desktop and other similar services can be used to take over a user's screen and troubleshoot from across the world, as well, as long as each user has a solid internet connection. Even technical support staff located in the same building can use remote desktop functionality, keeping them at their desks and speeding up the process of resolving tickets.

Backup

When contracting with an ISP, businesses have the option of adding cloud backup



services to their suite of services. This allows businesses to remove all files from on-site hard drives and move them to an off-site server, saving money on support staff and hardware. This also gives professionals the peace of mind of knowing that all data is safely backed up in the event of a disaster or hard drive failure.

Even when data is moved to the cloud, businesses are still completely in control, thanks to dashboards that allow an

“EVEN TECHNICAL SUPPORT STAFF LOCATED IN THE SAME BUILDING CAN USE REMOTE DESKTOP FUNCTIONALITY.”

administrator to choose the desired frequency of dashboard backups. If a file needs to be restored, your administrator can login to the dashboard and take care of it immediately, so there's no need to put in a ticket and wait. This also allows administrators to remain aware of how backups are being performed, preventing failures that can lead to data loss. In the event of a disaster, all of your data can be restored instantly using any internet-connected computer.

Security

Businesses today have so many devices, individual instances of security software are no longer feasible. With an ISP, you

can set up a security suite that protects all connected devices against viruses, spyware, and hacking attempts, keeping you from losing the data you rely on. Having the latest technology in place to protect you against intrusions will help prevent an embarrassing data breach. Security solutions provided by ISPs cover your business's computers and file servers 24/7, with solutions customized to the individual needs of each business. Service providers like Cox Business offer free security licenses with each business account.

Along with control of backups, ISPs also provide a dashboard to allow administrators to control security features. Through this dashboard, administrators can run reports and change settings. All updates and patches are downloaded automatically, saving man hours that can be directed toward other tasks. All connected devices are updated throughout the day to ensure they remain protected from any new threats that emerge.

To remain competitive and productive, your business needs fast, reliable internet access for each of its devices. By being aware of the many options and how they affect your daily operations, you can make the best choice to carry you forward.

