

# CONNECTING TO THE INTERNET

The days of dial-up Internet connections – where you'd use your home phone to connect to your ISP at slow speeds – are pretty much behind us.

Websites are now more complex and we want to view them faster and download larger files. The answer is high-speed Internet access – also known as broadband.

A broadband Internet connection has the added advantage of not tying up the phone line and it's always on, which means you're not making a phone call every time you want to access the Internet access.

There are four types of broadband:

- **ADSL** – uses your existing telephone line, but you can still use the phone to make and receive calls while connected to the Internet at high speed.

- **Wireless** – a little like the mobile phone network, a wireless modem connects to your computer and communicates with the closest transmitter.

- **Cable** – the fastest and most expensive form of broadband. It comes to your home through a separate wire, or can share your cable TV connection if you have one.

- **Satellite** – used in rural areas when no other connection is available. The Internet connection is made via a satellite dish connected to the home. Satellite connections can sometimes be high-speed in only one direction.

*When it comes to price and speed, ADSL is the most popular for homes. However, the faster the connection the more you will pay.*

Always check the plans details to determine that the "downstream" speed is faster than the "upstream" speed (eg: 256/64Kbps). This means your Internet connection will be faster

when you are pulling information down from the Internet, rather than the other way around. The most common upstream activity you'll be doing is sending email and you won't notice the speed difference.

The term "download" doesn't just refer to the music, programs, photos and other files that you download from the Internet. Every time you view a website, your computer has to download it to your PC. Every line of text, image, and advertisement that makes up that page is downloaded and is counted towards your limit. This is in addition to the files and programs you download.

A plan with a low download limit will be the cheapest, but you'll pay a price for every extra MB

downloaded after that (often around \$0.15/MB). Always use your ISP's usage meter to keep track of your limits. Opt for a provider that will let you change plans once you find out what your needs are. Some plans will only decrease your download speed after you've reached your usage limit, instead of landing you with extra charges.

*You can get great discounts on plans if you're switching from another ISP or if you choose to have your home phone provided by the same supplier, so shop around.*

For more information visit [www.broadbandnow.gov.au](http://www.broadbandnow.gov.au).

Visit Ms Megabyte's free resources including a helpdesk and handy FingerTips newsletter at [www.getmega.com](http://www.getmega.com) ■



**ISP** – Internet Service Provider

**ADSL** – Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Line

**Kbps** – kilobits per second

## Net Nasties

Make sure your kids are safe with a free Internet content filter from [www.netalert.gov.au](http://www.netalert.gov.au)