

How to check if your service provider is throttling your internet

Be sure your ISP isn't slowing down your Wifi while you're stuck working from home.

There's little more infuriating than a Netflix show stuttering and stopping right at the climax thanks to bad Wi-Fi -- especially when Netflix is all you have to tide you over during a quarantine. The collective groans, the held breath as loading stalls at 99%, the children crying for Moana to come back: all of these could be avoided if the internet just stayed steady. But alas, steady internet is rarely our reality, and in many areas, internet service provider options are too limited to solve the problem.



What's worse, with last year's Supreme Court decision to decline to hear an appeal on net neutrality, ISPs can still throttle your internet, limiting your broadband if you're streaming more YouTube or Hulu than they want, and providing slower connections to websites owned by their competitors. Luckily, there's a solution to some of these problems: the virtual private network. Basically, ISPs need to see your IP address to slow down your internet, and a good VPN will shield that identity. Here's how to find one and use it to check whether your ISP is artificially slowing down your internet.

Correction, Feb. 10: This article previously misattributed last year's net neutrality ruling to the Supreme Court, rather than the DC Circuit Court that decided the case. The Supreme Court declined to hear the appeal. The article has been corrected.

Update, Feb. 12: A few readers reported issues with one speed testing link, so we have replaced it with another verified test.

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