

## What is Bandwidth?

If you think of the Internet as the information superhighway, bandwidth is how many lanes of traffic the Internet can handle.

Bandwidth describes how much information can be sent over a connection at one time and is measured in megabits per second (Mbps).

### *When do computers use large amounts of bandwidth?*

There are several reasons a computer might use a large amount of bandwidth. Some of these are:

- The machine has been compromised (broken in to—as with the recent SoBig virus)
- Peer-to-peer (P2P) applications like Kazaa are being used
- Graphics, movies, audio, video, or software are being downloaded
- A videoconferencing event is occurring
- Some Web applications are running (such as Real Player)

### *Your ISP monitors bandwidth to ensure the quality of your service*

In order to make sure that all subscribers have the same opportunity for a good online experience, we monitor and control bandwidth use. Controlling bandwidth also helps us control costs.

Monitoring bandwidth also alerts us to network security breaches. Use of a computer to scan other machines or as a file repository is reflected in a bandwidth spike

### *Ensuring quality for all*

When a few people use excessive amounts of bandwidth, it slows the network down for everyone. To make sure that each of you has a good experience online, we may limit the bandwidth available to those who are using excessive amounts.

### *We do not monitor for content*

We monitor types of Internet traffic and whether that type of traffic is using excessive amounts of bandwidth. If a machine is using excessive bandwidth, we check the type of traffic it is generating.

### *Why are P2P applications a problem?*

File sharing applications, such as Kazaa, Morpheus, Gnutella, WinMX and a host of others, consume large amounts of bandwidth. Most users download music, video, audio, and graphics files that take large amounts of bandwidth to download.

In addition, most users don't realize that when they use P2P applications, they open their computer to act as a server. The result is that you are giving your bandwidth away.

If you download or share copyrighted material, you can be prosecuted. The maximum allowable fine under the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DCMA) is \$250,000 per song title.

### *Tips for reducing bandwidth use*

The following are just a few ideas for reducing unnecessary bandwidth consumption.

#### **Think about what you download**

Movies and audio consume large amounts of bandwidth. Downloading video and audio files or using streaming video or audio will quickly eat up bandwidth.

#### **Don't leave your Web browser open on a page with automatically refreshing content**

Some Web pages automatically refresh themselves after a certain time period (for example, banner advertisements can reload every minute or so). If you leave your browser on a page like this for a long period of time, you could be consuming large amounts of bandwidth without realising it.

If you use Morpheus, Grokster or another file-sharing application, make sure it's not running each time you turn on your computer.

If you use Real Player to play CDs on your computer, turn off the online function.