

Internet Access and Cost

**In February 2020, Consumer Reports surveyed Americans about internet service.**

We presented Americans with the definitions of several forms of internet access and asked which, if any, they have: broadband internet, dial-up internet (DSL), and wireless internet. All further questions were asked only of the **66% of Americans who had broadband internet access.**

More than half of Americans with broadband internet access say their internet service is bundled, such as with cable television or phone service.

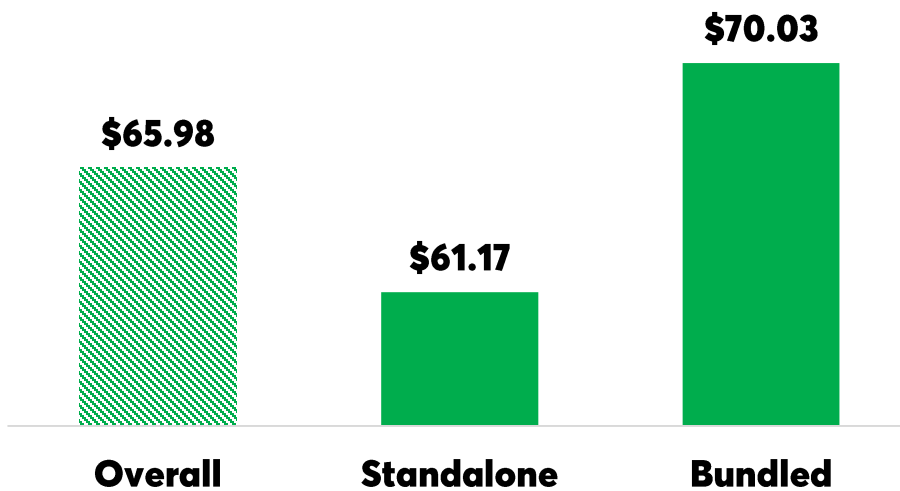
■ **Bundled** ■ **Standalone**



Base: Respondents whose households have broadband internet access.

When broadband internet is part of a bundle, Americans pay more. *They are also more likely to be unsure how much it costs (12% vs 3% of Americans with standalone internet bills).*

**MEDIAN MONTHLY COST OF BROADBAND INTERNET**



Base: Respondents whose households have broadband internet access who knew what it cost. Question included note "If your internet is part of a bundle, please respond only for the cost of the internet."

**Provider Options are Limited for a Majority of Americans**

**26%** of Americans with broadband internet access say their current provider was the **only option** for getting broadband internet where they live.

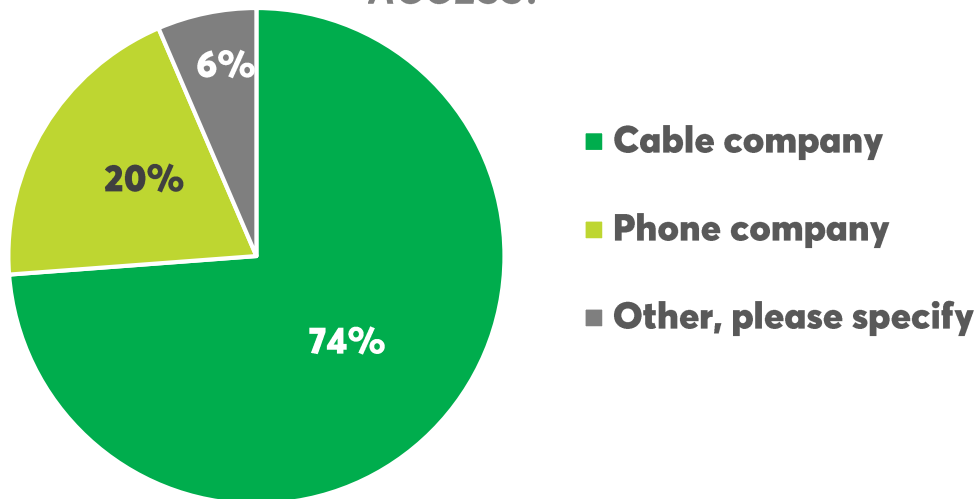
**32%** of Americans with broadband internet access say they had only **one other option** besides their current provider.

Just **24%** of Americans with broadband internet access say they had **at least three providers** to choose from.

**18%** are unsure how many options they had.

A majority of Americans with broadband internet access say a cable company provides this access.

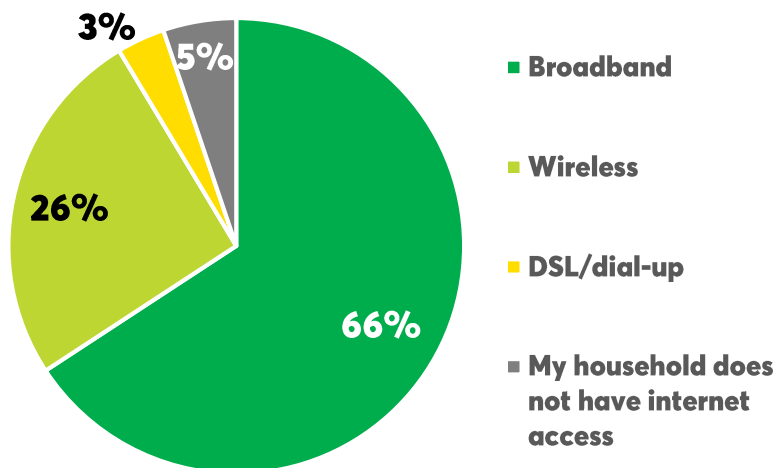
### WHAT KIND OF COMPANY PROVIDES THIS ACCESS?



Base: Respondents whose households have broadband internet access. "Other" write-ins were mostly variations on "internet company only" and specific company names.

### TYPES OF INTERNET ACCESS

We presented Americans with the definitions of several forms of internet access (see sidebar). The majority of Americans have broadband internet, the focus of this fact sheet.



Base: All respondents.

### Definitions of Types of Internet Access

We presented Americans with the following definitions when asking "Through which, if any, of the following services does your household access the internet?"

**Broadband internet** access service refers to an internet connection of at least 25 Mbps download speed and at least 3 Mbps upload speed—that is, faster than dial-up. This requires a cable or fiber-optic connection somewhere in the house. If you have a WiFi router but it is connected to a modem, you have broadband.

**Dial-up internet (DSL)** uses a phone line (landline) to connect to the internet; if you cannot use the phone while online, you have dial-up.

**Wireless internet** is what smartphones receive. This speed is around 10-20 Mbps. This is different from having a cable broadband internet connection and having a wireless router somewhere in your house.

### METHODOLOGY

Each month, Consumer Reports fields the American Experiences Survey (AES) to track consumer attitudes and behaviors over time. The survey is administered by NORC at the University of Chicago through its AmeriSpeak® Panel to a probability-based nationally representative sample. Interviews are administered both online and by phone. This sample was collected with English interviews only; since July 2020, interviews have been conducted in Spanish as well as English.

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