

Which is the Safer Alternative, Dial-Up or Broadband?

You've finally gone high speed with a cable modem or DSL and you love the speed. However, are you taking the right precautions to keep your computer safe? High speed broadband is a blessing. Remember the days when you could go make yourself a snack and go to the bathroom while your computer downloaded one page? That is no longer true when you have broadband service. Dial-up is limited by the bandwidth of phone lines and web content is getting larger and larger. The bandwidth for dial-up is not usually large enough to send large content file pages in a timely manner. There is new technology that allows you to speed up your dial-up connection. Both NetZero and EarthLink offer high-speed dial-up that are said to be five times faster than traditional service. You will also see advertised on the Internet, special programs to boost speed. As always with any program that you download from the Internet, you need to know the site you are on is secure. You don't want to add Spyware or adware while adding the program to speed up your connection. I found as an early user of new cable Internet service that it was so much faster I was amazed at how fast my pages loaded. I was one of the first in the city to receive this new service. As more and more users jumped on the high-speed bandwagon, I noticed a slow down to my Internet service. The cable company has fixed that performance issue by adding new channels and splitting the users. This allows the speed, which we can easily get used to and like. How secure is broadband service? Broadband does have its advantages but there are also some dangers involved as well. First, when you are using dial-up, you are more than likely shutting your computer down when you are done surfing or working on the Internet. With your computer shut down, it won't allow hackers or Spyware to get into your system. With broadband, their boast is "you are always connected." I know this to be true; because when I turn my computer on in the morning, it stays on until I shut it down for the night. While this is convenient, it also poses a danger by leaving your computer exposed to the work of hackers and Spyware all that time. With your computer "always on", an important fact to remember is the road to the Internet is a two-way road and Spyware and hackers can be having a field day with your computer. One such attack is called "denial of service" and has hit prominent sites like Excite at Home, eBay, and Yahoo. The Undernet, which supports the IRC chat network, has also been hit with this attack. Many experts warn that a particular worm can potentially cripple the Internet and could already have the worms seeded into many computers. They are afraid that these worms will be activated all at once and cause a massive failure of many Internet sites. Hackers can get into computers that are serviced by these high-speed DSL and cable modem connections and are able to get personal information like credit card and bank account details. Many companies provide the first step in stopping these intruders by disabling the file-sharing program that is on the Windows operating system of their customer's computers. This help prevents other users from seeing inside your computer. Installing a firewall is another simple and inexpensive precaution. A firewall is just what it says. It builds a wall around your computer to keep hackers and Spyware from getting your personal information. Experts say that once your computer is compromised, sometimes the only cure is to reformat the hard drive. This is something that is time-consuming and frustrating and should be done only as a last resort. Security issues with broadband connection will continue to grow as many more households start connecting with high-speed connectors. According to Nielsen/Net Ratings, broadband users increased by 134 percent in the past year. They report that nearly 29 million users are connected to a broadband connection in the year 2004. It's mind boggling to think how many more have been added since then. Enjoy your broadband speed and convenience, but prepare to take the right precautions to keep your computer safe.

About the Author

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