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# The many ways to get connected

James Turner

When it comes to choosing an Internet service provider, consumers have more options than ever before - especially those who live near population centers.

Just about anyone with a phone has one or more providers offering service via a modem, high-speed lines, or cable. Here's a look at the current choices:

Dial-up service requires a modem and phone line. Available from local-service providers, also bundled into computer purchases from companies like Gateway and from national providers like AT&T, MCI Worldcom, and AOL. Prices range from \$10 to \$30 per month for unlimited service. Check [thelist.internet.com/](http://thelist.internet.com/) to find local providers.

Integrated services digital network (ISDN) uses special phone wiring to connect to your house. It's not available in many areas and tends to be expensive (sometimes hundreds of dollars per month). Speed is somewhat faster than dial-up service.

Digital subscriber line (DSL) uses existing phone lines but doesn't tie up your phone. Your computer must be within about two to three miles (depending on type of service) from your phone company's central office. Operates at a very high speed. Prices range from \$40 per month to many hundreds of dollars per month. Check [www.2wire.com](http://www.2wire.com) for availability in your area.

Cable modem: Either your cable company offers it, or it doesn't. Also runs at very high speed. Price is typically \$40 to \$50 per month.

Wireless uses cellular technology. It requires special hardware (about \$100 to \$200) and service runs about \$40 per month. Portable, yes, but slow.

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