



FCC Speed Test App Tip Sheet

Description and Purpose

Q: Why does the FCC have a Speed Test App?

A: The app provides data for the FCC's Measuring Broadband America Program's mobile-performance measurement effort, an initiative to gather crowdsourced data on cellular network performance across the United States. The FCC mobile performance testing software, developed in cooperation with [SamKnows Inc.](#), uses smartphone-based technology to collect broadband performance data, with the highest commitment to protecting participants' privacy. The anonymized data is freely available ([MBA-Mobile Data](#)) to consumers, academics, policymakers, and any other interested parties.

Q: What is the FCC mobile app called and where can I get it?

A: It is called the FCC Speed Test app, and is available in the Google Play Store [for Android devices](#), published by the developer "FCCAPPS," or in the Apple App Store [for iOS devices](#), published by the developer [SamKnows](#). Search "FCC Speed Test" in either store.

Q: Aren't there other speed tests already available?

A: There are other speed test apps. The FCC Speed Test mobile application helps the FCC fulfill a Congressional requirement to collect and provide the American public with *free, open, and transparent information on mobile broadband performance* across the United States. Other speed tests may not disclose their collection methods publicly, may impose fees for broad access to the data they collect, and may not reveal measurement details.

Q: Why should I download the app?

A: As a volunteer contributing to this effort, you get information about the broadband performance of networks that you use. Additionally, like any crowdsourced measurement effort, more volunteer participants will result in better quality data that is more statistically accurate and representative of the network performance that consumers experience. The aggregated and anonymized data will inform consumers and industry, and may lead to better mobile broadband performance for the nation. Through your efforts and those of other volunteers, the American public gets an accurate, unbiased, and open view of mobile broadband performance.

Q: Is the app free?

A: While the application itself is free, data transmitted by the app will count against any data usage limits for your service plan. To ensure that the amount of data used by the app is minimal, the app's default setting limits its data usage to no more than 100 MB per month, which is a small fraction of many data plans. Users can change the data limit setting in the app.

Q: Why does the Android app include scheduled tests?

A: It helps to provide a more accurate view of typical network performance. Randomized tests distributed in an unbiased manner over various time periods and locales provide a more statistically valid approach to data collection. (You can disable scheduled background tests at your discretion or if they interfere with device performance.)

*NOTE: Scheduled tests cannot be run on Apple devices due to iOS security features. As a result, the only option for such devices is manual on-demand testing.



Privacy

Q: What personal data is collected?

A: The FCC has taken significant measures to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of volunteers for this program. No personally identifiable information is collected. We also use privacy measures developed and reviewed by the Federal Trade Commission and academic researchers to ensure that any data that could potentially identify specific smartphones (e.g., location and time stamps) is anonymized. The FCC is committed to ensuring that only network data is collected and made available to the public.

Q: So what information do you collect?

A: Data related to the radio characteristics of the handset, information about the handset type and operating system version, the GPS coordinates available from the handset at the time each test is run, the date and time of the observation, and the results of active tests are recorded on the handset. The files are transmitted to storage servers at periodic intervals after the completion of active test measurements.

Using the App

Q: What kind of devices can I use to run this application?

A: The application is designed to run on both the Android and iOS operating devices such as smartphones and tablets.

Q: How do I run the tests?

A: Open the app and click "Start testing."

Q: Can I do only one of the tests?

A: Toggle any of the blue on/off switches located on the main Test screen and you will be able to choose specific tests to perform. The "Latency," "Jitter," and "Packet loss" tests are all done at once and can only be switched on or off as a group.

Q: How can I limit the data used so I don't exceed my data plan?

A: Go to the settings and select "Mobile data" to choose how much data the app can use each month.

Q: I don't want the app to run any background tests. How do I disable them?

A: To disable background tests on an Android device, go to the "Test scheduler" under settings and toggle the "Allow periodic background test" switch. Please keep in mind that the program's success is highly dependent on the background tests to provide the public with the most-complete information about the performance of nation's mobile broadband infrastructure.

Apple devices do not support background testing.

Q. How do I remove the app?

A. Users may uninstall the application at any time via their smartphone's normal application uninstallation procedure.

Results from Your Device

Q: How do I see specific results for my device?

A: Select "Charts" in the menu bar. There you will be able to see a daily summary of test results, separated by "Download," "Upload," "Latency," and "Packet Loss." In addition to a chart of your tests, you will also see a list summarizing your latest test results.



Q: How do I see the details of a specific test?

A: If you want to see the full results of a specific test, tap on any of the test results below the chart. Press the back arrow to return to the chart.

Q: How do I see averages for more than one week?

A: Select the arrow next to "Date range." A menu will let you choose different time periods ("Day," "Week," "Month," or "Year").

Q: What mobile connectivity does the app test?

A: The app will test the broadband performance of the connection (cellular or Wi-Fi) that is active when running a test. You can see which network connectivity was used in any given test by toggling open the "Your internet connection" drop-down menu on archived results. *Be sure to disable Wi-Fi before testing if you wish to test cellular performance.* You can see tests over different networks by selecting the "Data source" drop-down menu under "Charts." From there, select "All," "Mobile," "Wi-Fi," or specific technologies or SSIDs of Wi-Fi networks you have connected to over tests you have run in the past.

In the case of cellular networks, access to the Internet is entirely through the cellular network provider's infrastructure and the performance tests reflect that infrastructure's behavior.

With Wi-Fi networks, the combined performance of both the Wi-Fi access point and fixed Internet service provider's network contributes to the overall network performance assessment. Hence, the test results over Wi-Fi may not reflect the performance attainable on the fixed Internet service provider's network.

Technical Support and Feedback

Q: I'm having difficulty, how can I get technical support?

A: For tech support for the app, please contact community@samknows.com.

Q: How can I share feedback about the app?

A: Your feedback is welcome and encouraged. Please review the app in the Google Play and Apple App Store, and also send your feedback to feedback-mba@fcc.gov.

Consumer Help Center

For more information on consumer issues, visit the FCC's Consumer Help Center at www.fcc.gov/consumers.

Alternate formats

To request this article in an alternate format - braille, large print, Word or text document or audio - write or call us at the address or phone number at the bottom of the page, or send an email to fcc504@fcc.gov.

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