Guest Column
Michael F. Bolognini
Vice President and Market Leader, Cox Las Vegas

Keeping peace at home while everyone is online –
How to maximize your internet experience

Now that most of us are working and learning from home, you may be noticing that some websites may be a bit slow to load, and you may experience intermittent buffering when streaming video. While we are all trying to adapt to the new normal of learning and conducting business from home while we practice social distancing, more internet devices are being used, and for longer stretches of time. And let's face it, we are all using the internet to stay connected to people we love while we are staying close to home. Whether its downloading files, streaming video, gaming, hosting work meetings and family happy hours on Google Meets (and, sometimes all of these at once), these new and expanded uses of your home broadband network may slow things down.

Rest assured that while we at Cox have seen an increase in Internet traffic, our network was built to handle this. We've invested several billion dollars over the past five years to upgrade our Cox network to enable gigabit speeds and ensure we can support our customers' needs, especially in times like these. As you might imagine, there is currently more traffic and more demand on the network in residential areas and less in office buildings and stores. And peak times have shifted from evening to throughout the day – especially the middle of the afternoon – in residential areas.   As always, we're keeping a close eye on the health of our network and managing the network to provide a great internet experience.

While we take care of the network *to* your home, we want to make sure that your network *in* your home continues to run smoothly as well. There are many things you can do to improve the performance of your home network and ensure a good internet experience. For example, did you know that when your computer runs an automatic update or virus scan in the middle of the afternoon it takes up a significant amount of bandwidth?

To help, we have rounded up an impactful list of expert advice, tips and tricks to maximize your home network performance:

1. Disconnect devices in your home from your Wi-Fi like dishwashers, coffee makers and refrigerators as these devices do not require Wi-Fi to function.
2. When viewing movies, select standard definition (SD) versus high definition (HD).
3. Consider lowering the resolution on your doorbell camera and other security cameras while you are at home.
4. Place your Wi-Fi modem/router in a centrally located area so that the signal can reach more rooms within your home. Also put it up high on a shelf or tall piece of furniture because the signal travels outward and downward.
5. When planning video conferencing or Google Meets get-togethers, schedule them in the morning or evening hours, moving demand away from busy afternoon use.
6. Utilize telephone conference calls over video streaming meetings to lessen the demand on your home network.
7. You can plug your computer directly into your modem rather than working off your Wi-Fi.
8. Beware of windows, doors and cement walls as these are common obstructions that can interfere with the signal's ability to extend throughout your home.
9. If you have gamers at home, ask them to download upgrades and stream at night as gaming devices eat up a lot of bandwidth, slowing speed to other devices relying on Wi-Fi in the home.
10. Keep your Wi-Fi modem/router away from Bluetooth devices like smart watches as they tend to operate on the same frequency (2.4 GHZ) and can interfere with the transmission of data between your devices that use Wi-Fi. Additionally, steer clear of locating modems near a refrigerator, microwave, baby monitors and other devices that emit electronic radiation.

Our focus is to help keep everyone connected during this unprecedented time. From everyone at Cox, we wish everyone health and happiness.

For additional tips please visit Cox.com.

MIchael Bolognini is Vice President and Market Leader, Cox Las Vegas, which employs a team of nearly 1,600 Nevadans and has contributed $4.8 million in cash and in-kind COVID-related support in Southern Nevada.