



CUB's Guide to Buying Your Own Internet Router/Modem

It may seem like a silly concept in the age of the cellphone, but there was a time when people rented telephones from the phone company. Yet, it seems that the Internet industry is following the same path.

Most consumers receive Internet from the phone company or the cable company, and most are still paying those companies to rent their modems and routers. In fact, Comcast now charges \$11/month in such rental fees. Many Comcast customers probably don't know they can buy their own modem, and it could pay for itself in seven to 10 months.

(Note: Unfortunately, you can't buy your own equipment if you are an AT&T U-verse customer. The company does not allow any modem to be used with U-verse other than the one you buy or rent from it.)



What is a modem?

A modem enables your computer, or any device plugged directly into the modem, to access the Internet.

What is a router?

A router enables your home to have Wi-Fi, meaning a computer or tablet in your home can access the Internet wirelessly. Since many consumers do not want to be plugged into a modem before sinking into their favorite chair to surf the Web, most consumers will need to buy a modem AND a router. (Tablets also require a router to connect, since tablets do not plug into modems.)

How do I buy a modem and a router?

You can purchase your modem and router separately, or purchase a device that contains both—it's up to you. Both options connect you to the Internet. Keep in mind, however, that if you purchase a combined device, if one part breaks (i.e., the router OR the modem) you will have to replace the entire item.

Before purchasing your modem or router you need to check with your Internet provider to view its "approved" modem/router list. For Comcast you can find that information at <http://mydeviceinfo.comcast.net>. There, you need to indicate which service classification you currently have with the company (Example: Economy Plus, Performance, etc.). You can get that information from your bill.

Since different classifications relate to different Internet speeds, this is a necessary step so you can get a modem/router that can take full advantage of the bandwidth for which you are paying. Different classifications relate to different Internet speeds. The general rule is that your modem needs to be at least "Docis3" to be compatible.

Information for Comcast customers

You need to buy a modem that is compatible with your phone service. A list of compatible modems is found at <http://mydeviceinfo.comcast.net/>. Additional information can be found at <http://customer.xfinity.com/help-and-support/internet/list-of-approved-cable-modems/>. In order for your device to work with Comcast/Xfinity voice service it must have a device type of "eMTA."

Information for Charter customers

Charter customers are given a free modem when they sign up for Internet. Charter charges a

one-time fee and monthly fee for a router. You can purchase your own router, however, and forego the fee.

Information for Frontier customers

Frontier customers are given a free modem when they sign up for internet. Customers are also given a free router if they sign up for wireless internet. Since there is no monthly charge, it makes sense to use the company-provided device.

Information for AT&T U-verse customers

AT&T does not allow you to buy your own modem to use with its service. Instead, AT&T insists you rent or buy the company's "gateway device," which includes a router. You can connect a faster router to the gateway box, but, unfortunately, there is no way to avoid paying AT&T a rental fee. CUB believes such policies are bad for developing a competitive market that drives down prices and gives people good choices.

Information for Mediacom customers

Mediacom does allow customers to purchase their own modem and router, which allows customers to avoid rental fees. You will need a Docsis 3.0 compatible modem. Most modems and routers are compatible with their service, according to Mediacom.