

# "Keeping You Informed"

## Network Speeds

April 2007

There seems to always be discussion and frustration about Messiah College's "network speeds". I have heard students say that the network is slow, or that the internet is slow. They have used these terms interchangeably, but they actually reference different things. I believe students really mean that they can not load webpages or movies or download files as fast as they think they should.

Let me first define what "network speed" means. Network speed is how fast our internal network is. Our network consists of all computers and servers on campus. Our speed is at 100 Mbit/s. This means that you can send files between computers on campus with relative ease. You can also copy files to and from your K drive (student file space) with relative ease, as the K drive server is also on campus.

On the other hand, "internet speed" is how fast a campus computer can access websites and servers off campus. We pay for an internet connection, just like at home you pay for one from Comcast or Verizon or someone like that. We, of course, pay for much more than you would at home. So why, might you ask, does it seem that the internet speed here on campus is slower than at home? There are many reasons for this.

First, it depends on when you are accessing the internet. Unlike at home, here you are sharing your internet with everyone on campus. When a majority of students are on the internet, it will of course be slower. This seems to be around 3-5pm and 7-10pm. The internet seems to be faster after 10pm and into the AM, when most students are sleeping or in class.

Second, it depends on where you are going on the internet. If you are going to a simple website owned by a very large company, it will load quickly. Google.com comes up within seconds whenever you go to it. Their site is simple, and their servers are many. Youtube.com, on the other hand, is not a simple webpage. It will not always come up as quickly as you might like.

Third, there are many bandwidth-intensive internet websites today, and when many students are on them, it makes the internet feel sluggish. This would happen when a good number of students are on facebook, youtube, watching TV on ABC.com/NBC.com etc, downloading using BitTorrent, or gaming on their PC or console.

So, network speed on campus is reasonably fast and pain free. Transferring files onto or off of your K drive, for example, rarely leaves you impatient. However, internet speed will fluxuate depending on how many students are online and what they are doing. When every student is busy researching schoolwork on google, pages load quickly. When every student is on IM, Gmail chat, watching youtube videos, uploading pics to Facebook, and downloading with bittorrent, the internet speed will feel a bit slow.