



## How to Read Your Bill

### Is my cable bill different from my internet bill? Why do I pay for cable and internet if it's from one company?

In the 1950s, cable companies began offering television, or cable TV, services. By the 1990s, the same cable companies began offering internet service, and even phone service. So nowadays, your cable company could be your internet service provider (ISP), phone company, cable TV company—or all three! Based on the provider, the bills can be the same or they can be different.

Cable companies began branding and renaming their services when they started offering internet service. For example, Comcast transitioned to Xfinity, Charter renamed itself to Spectrum, and Verizon calls its home internet and television service 'Fios'. Even though it is from the same company, the internet is considered an additional service by these companies.

### How are cable bills different from internet bills?

While these bills often come from the same company, you generally pay for a specific tier of service within each offering. With cable TV bills, you pay for a programming package. Cable TV bills are fraught with extra fees—such as those for broadcast TV and regional sports networks—that can make the final cost much more than the advertised price. With internet bills, you pay for a certain level of broadband speed. These bills, too, can carry extra fees—such as modem or router fees—that can be reduced by purchasing your own equipment.

### Why are services bundled into one cost?

Since cable companies can offer television, internet, and phone service, they like to package and advertise these services together as bundles. Typically, these bundles can be cheaper than getting the services separately and allows you to receive one bill for all services. A downside is that you can't often tell the individual price for each service, so it's hard to compare costs with a different provider if you are looking at alternative options.

### How do I read a cable bill versus bundle bill that includes internet service?

Some companies will list the price for each service included in the bundle, whether it's internet service, cable TV, phone service, or all three. Since they are not required to list the price for each individual service, some companies choose not to do so which leaves consumers guessing what each service costs. Adding to the confusion, companies add all sorts of fees to your bill including some that apply to your TV service, different ones for your internet service, and still more to your phone service.