

Dear Spectrum, the sequel: (or another 4000 plus words)

CHARTER COMMUNICATIONS, INC./Spectrum - Mission Statement

To integrate the highest quality service with superior entertainment and communications products that consistently exceed the expectations of its growing customer base. <https://mission-statement.com/spectrum-mission/>

CHARTER COMMUNICATIONS, INC. - Employee Alignment

CHARTER COMMUNICATIONS, INC.'s mission, vision & values motivate **50%** of CHARTER COMMUNICATIONS, INC. employees. Comparably data clearly shows that a focused mission statement and cohesive core company values are vital to maintaining employee alignment. <https://www.comparably.com/companies/charter-communications-in/mission>

The scene begins at CHARTER COMMUNICATIONS, INC. Headquarters



Cut to a CHARTER corporate office boardroom.



As the scene unfolds, a VP in Corporate Marketing is walking into a hastily called meeting where the attendees are jamming to my *Got the Spectrum Blues* song with its BB King like guitar riffs and the Chuck Berry like honky-tonk piano licks blasting over the PA system. He cuts off the speakers and then addresses his staff, as well as a small customer support contingent.

Folks, he says *“When our customers are sending us blues songs that rhyme our company trademark name Spectrum, to their experience with us of getting it in the rectum, we may just have an corporate image problem. What do you all think?”*

The sound in the room is nothing but crickets for an uncomfortable period of time until finally the new guy in customer support shyly speaks up. *“I have an idea, what if we were to upgrade our systems to be able to deliver what we promise? We could actually deliver a service commensurate to what our customers are paying for, what they expect, and want. They could eventually learn to love us. By doing this we could actually fully embrace our Mission Statement. Let’s show everyone that we are part of the good 50% of employees.”*

There is another few moments of stone silence, followed by the whole room breaking out into raucous laughter. After several minutes of this, the VP finally breaks into the ruckus still laughing, *“We could do that... but NAAAH!”*

****UPDATE****

On 3/29 early that Monday morning I received a phone call from a personable gal named Carissa, a corporate escalation specialist she said, informing me that I would be receiving another call within 24 hours from yet another person to work on my problem. As a result of my Sunday email, her job she said was to direct my email to the proper person(s). She questioned me about her concern over proper COVID protocols being followed by local technicians. I explained that she had misunderstood my mention of a local technician who had vacationed in Mexico in my email. I said that it was not because he came to my house after vacation, (he came before this) but my point in my original email was that I did not want that tech back in my house for at least two weeks afterwards. Since Field Supervisors are always accompanied by a tech (per Bob over the phone with corporate) I wanted to make sure that he didn't show up at my house. I asked Carissa if she had read my rather lengthy email and said yes and that she had enjoyed my song lyrics but hadn't listened to the attached song. I told her she should because it was a song about unrequited love and was most certainly worth a chuckle.

Later on 3/29, up on Bullshit Mountain where the turd polishers work 24/7, the avalanche of fecal gravity I had apparently triggered by my email to Charter corporate (or perhaps it was my song lyric rhyming Spectrum with rectum) began to flow. Anyway, this downhill flow had now achieved sufficient velocity so that late in the day I received a call from a nice guy who he said was the manager of Field Supervision for Eastern Wis. He called me from your southern office, and was following up he said on a request from corporate and indicated that he would dig into my issue with the local office and would get back to me RSN. He said that he had two main goals. The first was to solve my problem and the second was to find out what kind of screw-ups had caused this problem to end up on his desk. I think he was a bit annoyed that a VP had kicked this problem into his Inbox. I asked him if he had read my email, and he said he had not yet seen it. Really? He never did get back to me, but sent someone else instead.

Note: I can't believe you people are still using that horridly ugly old TeleCable metal building. I have some bad cable TV memories of that place, from the late eighties.

On 3/30 late in the day I received a call from Field Sup. Mgr. One who he said is in charge of the local Field Supervisors, and Field Supervisor One's boss. (This is number six technician if you are counting, as I am.) See my previous email. He said that he was in my neighborhood today with a tech doing some testing and had positive results to report. I questioned him about how his testing differed from the bad tests that Field Sup. One had reported to me last week. He said that he hadn't spoken with Field Sup. One because as you know he works Wed. to Sat.

Note: How the hell would I know that? I am not and do not want to be involved in managing your company much less your personnel schedules. Although I think I have learned your management structure over the past five weeks, because I have met or spoken with all of them. If pressed, I could whip up a local Spectrum org chart. My job as I see it, as an unsatisfied paying customer is only to point out the flaws and deficiencies in your business service delivery as I see them.

I then pressed Field Sup. Mgr. more about the testing, and he said he was using a modem provisioned for 600mbps and his phone and laptop. He said that he really did not trust the laptop because it was so loaded with corporate software overhead (vpn, encryption etc.) that it would skew the results. I asked him if he had tested where the fiber changed over to coaxial/copper and how far away from this subdivision that was. He said no and that he didn't know. This Again! Really? One of the many key things that I have learned over my thirty years in the IT business, is that consistency of test methodology logic is important. Randomly switching out modems and laptops until you get the desired results is a bit of a shotgun approach and appears to me to be doomed to failure.

*Note: Is it not possible to give your techs the tools they need to do their jobs? A meter and a phone are not the proper testing tools when most people are connecting computers to your network. It may seem silly, but how about you actually give them a Ethernet/wireless laptop that they can use for testing? Ideally it would not be used for anything else but this. You don't have to call it a laptop, you can call it a **meter** if you like.*

I also shared with Field Sup. Mgr. One some info including my own VPN testing which I had previously reported via email to Field Sup. one day earlier, and that I had found no significant bandwidth restrictions from using a VPN. This was news to him, because of course he had not spoken with Field Sup. One yet. Apparently your business has not yet discovered

email as a valuable communication tool. God forbid you would use 20 year old database technology for the techs to enter in case notes, and share that across the corporation with something like SharePoint. He said that he ran out of time today, but would return tomorrow accompanied by Field Supervisor One to do more testing at my PED and *speak with me personally*.

Note. Oh, Oh, does this mean more trying to fix this mentally with me will be in play? Or does it mean that I am going to get a modem provisioned at 600mbps to be able to get my provisioned 400mbps? Stay tuned for the next episode...

3/31 Field Supervisor Mgr. One and Field Supervisor Three showed up around midday. That is technician six and seven now if you are still counting. Mostly it was the first option from above, but by nicer guys at a higher level of competence and intelligence. They spent about half hour tapped into my PED to some equipment in the van and made some phone calls. **In the three hours or so that they were here in the house, the speeds got progressively better, but only at speedtest.net.** I suggested using a scientific method of testing three sites and averaging them out, but that did not fly with them. I did notice on a trace route test, that Charter redirects from speedtest.net to their own server and Field Supervisor Mgr. One readily owned up to that fact. There were also wide variations on speed depending on if you use IE, Edge, Chrome, Firefox or Pale Moon browsers. I did not see a scientifically sound testing program in use here, and it led me to think that I don't understand all I know about this.

For example my Surface Pro tablet had been doing about 100-150mbps on wireless and was doing 300mbps by the time they left. This is with no changes to the router or the tablet. Go figure. This evening, I cannot repeat those results. On my one Ethernet connected computer Field Supervisor Three reset the Ethernet card in my computer speed from 1Gb full duplex to auto and back and claimed some improvement from that. After they left, **I could no longer achieve the same speeds either wired or wireless.**

I think that a couple of things happened here. First; they did some provisioning tweaking of my modem from the van which did not take immediate effect, as the modem was disconnected and turned off for the testing. I think some evidence for this idea is that my upload speed seems to have moved from a pretty consistent 20mbps or less, to a consistent 22-23mbps. Second; bombarding your speedtest.net server repeatedly perhaps did some kind of temporary data caching and improved the test results.

I don't want to seem like a cynic, but my CST continuous speed tester software still shows my speed at or below 250mbps, and all the other nine speed test sites show results well below my provisioned 450mbps on an Ethernet connection.

My five wireless "n" machines (300mbps Max) continue to get 60-100mbps. On one of these I got 150mbps last week and only 60mbps today.

My three wireless "ac" (600mbps Max) machines continue to get 150-250mbps.

4/1 Left a voicemail for Field Sup. Mgr. One making a request to try their 700mbps test modem here. Field Sup. Mgr. One called me back today, he is coming tomorrow with the test modem they have been using for final testing here. Meanwhile (I had some time to kill) so I searched the Spectrum page on the web to see if I could notice any mandatory disclaimers resulting from your loss in litigation, \$60 million FCC fine, and forced marketing changes in NY, and all I found was this:

Go Faster with Spectrum Internet® Ultra

- Choose Internet Ultra for speeds starting at 400 Mbps (wireless speeds may vary)
- Enjoy a faster download speed, more consistently than any other provider.††

††Based on the latest FCC Broadband Report (in tiny print at the bottom of the page)

A little further research revealed that this report was generated from broadband providers own self-reporting to the FCC, and interestingly enough a search the 50 page pdf of this 2020 report and appendices for the keywords of Charter or Spectrum came up empty. I also found no comparisons of speed or anything else in the report with any other company. Go figure!

I did find this in an appendix however:

2020 FCC Report Appendix (again, self-reported)

State Mbps	10/1 Mbps	25/3 Mbps	50/5 Mbps	100/10 Mbps	250/25
Wisconsin	67.3%	56.1%	51.1%	48.2%	1.4%

4/2 Field Sup. Mgr. One arrived with the test modem around midday. On speedtest.net the new Ubee modem delivered 600mbps down and 40mbps up to his Dell laptop using Chrome, either wired or “ac” wireless. It delivered less using IE. It delivered the same also Ethernet and wireless on his smartphone, again using Chrome. It delivered 400plus mbps consistently to my Ethernet computer, 125mbps wireless “n” to the same computer two feet away from the Netgear XR1000 router. It delivered approx. 150-250mbps to my wireless “ac” computers and 50-100mbps to my wireless “n” computers all tests using a 5.2GHz connection. Use of Firefox, IE, or Pale Moon did not seem to impact the performance. Switching back to the Technicolor 400mbps modem brought back the inconsistent speed tests ranging from 350-450mbps tests, and a max of 200mbps to a wireless “ac” tablet. During all of these tests, the CST software reported a max of 250mbps. I will call this *Internet speed* versus *Charter speed*.

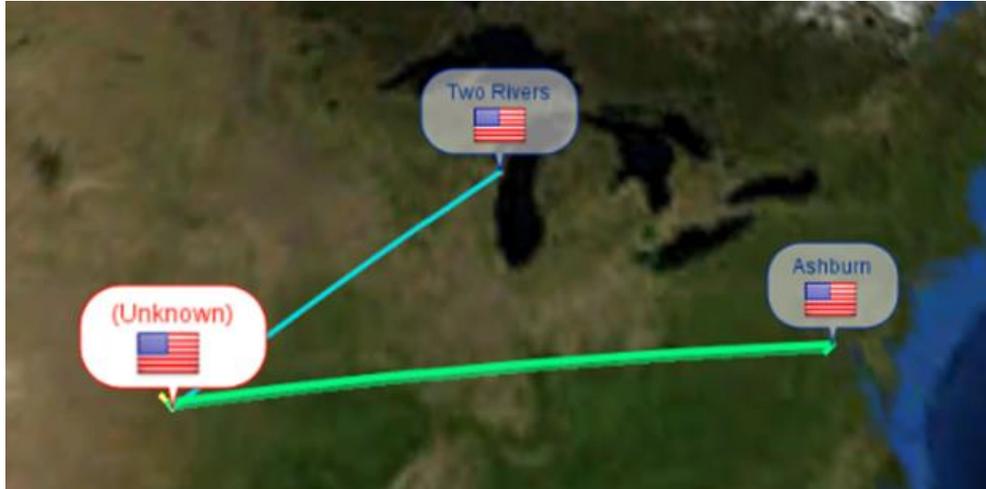
I again asked if anyone else in my area had speed above 100mbps, and how far away the fiber ended and their copper started. The I don’t know to both of these questions repeatedly means you are not willing to share this apparently. I do not hold Spectrum responsible for the networks outside of their own, but testing speed at **one** website redirected to your own network repeatedly cannot really be seen as indicative of a customer’s experience on the Internet. Even then, the test results are not consistent and repeatable to your own redirected speedtest.net site. When still on your network, test results at <https://www.spectrum.com/internet/speed-test> are about half of that (200mbps) but also inconsistent and can range up to 350mbps.

My takeaways both from today this whole Spectrum saga are these:

- 1. If you have the patience and persistence to stay after Spectrum and hold their feet to the fire, they eventually will and can make it better. It doesn’t hurt if you are retired with some time on your hands locked in your home due to a pandemic. After all, I went from a consistent 150mbps Ethernet to a consistent 300mbps on my original test computer on Spectrums network.**
- 2. Apparently, if you don’t have a *specific* Spectrum Dell laptop with a chrome browser and wireless “ac” you will not get consistent speed tests.** Remember, three other technician Spectrum HP laptops could not achieve the speed at my house or at neighborhood PED’s)
- 3. Apparently, if you don’t have a Spectrum smartphone with an Octacore (dual quad core) processors and 10Gb Ram you will not get consistent speed tests (my wife’s two smartphones will not crack 100mbps)**
- 4. OS and network hardware are more important beyond 100mbps. If you have Win7 and “n” wireless, or Win7 and gigabit Ethernet you will not get there consistently. If you have Win7 and “ac” wireless you won’t get there either. My six month old Surface Pro tablet with Win10 and “ac” wireless you won’t get there either with Firefox or Edge.**
- 5. VPN’s, firewalls, browser extensions, and antivirus software are not significant factors in bandwidth testing.**
- 6. Browser software like IE, Firefox, Edge, and Pale Moon will not give you consistent Spectrum speed tests**
- 7. Spectrum will not put 1GB files on one of their network servers for download testing, because they cannot maintain 400mbps for more than 10 seconds at a time**
- 8. 400mbps of *Charter speed* is actually about 250mbps or less of actual *Internet speed* as determined by CST and overall user impressions**
- 9. Spectrum appears to have these same problems with their 600mbps-40mbps (commercial) and 940mbps-40mbps (residential) copper deployments**
- 10. Symmetrical 1gb fiber deployment is our only hope in the US as we currently rank 12th in the world in broadband speed availability**

I am reluctant to revisit the whole hops thing, as I pretty well beat this horse to death in my last email and song. But these trace route results just appear to me to be a bit schizophrenic. Way too much ping ponging around, via your low cost peering agreements apparently, to get to the POP backbone. I have no malicious or nefarious intent here, am just trying to understand this. There are lots of routers involved here and latency can exceed 250ms in the later hops. Since

Traceroute measures the time it takes to get each response it has no way of knowing if any delays were encountered on the way out to the destination or on the way back, potentially providing misleading results.



From Two Rivers, Wisconsin to Greenwood Village, Colorado and then to Ashburn, Virginia for the backbone connection? See attachments for details.

My conclusion is that the Spectrum network will not consistently deliver 400mbps to me even on your own network, but it is however an *upgrade* from my previous 100mbps service. Customers like me must decide if half of a promise is worth an extra twenty bucks a month on an already overpriced service.

While I will not concede that your service meets my expectations, I will concede now that my results here are as good as you can currently make it.

Intro: My Dear, Dear Spectrum, does our unrequited love affair need to continue, or will you love me tomorrow? Let's slow my roll now, like my Internet, with another love song from me to you.

Got The Fiber Blues

I wrote you a letter and expected to hear crickets
Cause my Internet packets still act like they have rickets
With phone calls you responded and technicians you did dispatch
They did their best but all they could do was to make a patch

Chorus: My packets ping pong around your routers

Slowing me down and making me a doubter

Your monopoly behavior is telling
But it's not to me you will be selling
The millennials may use it for their mobile phones
But I want some real speed to come to my home

Chorus: My packets ping pong around your routers

Slowing me down and making me a doubter

Your kind has promised fiber for thirty years
Yet your network of band aids is leaving me in tears
We all want a network of fiber glass
Yet the copper you give me is just a pain in the ass

Chorus: My packets ping pong around your routers

Slowing me down and making me a doubter

Your mergers make you all more money
But to those of us who suffer, this is not very funny
Discount and freeze the cost if you want to be a suitor
Till you can get some overdue fiber to my computer

Chorus: My packets ping pong around your routers

Slowing me down and making me a doubter

I will grant you that network upgrading is a bit of a chicken and egg thing. On the other hand, if you build it they will come is still a thing. The 11 countries ahead of us on bandwidth must know something we don't or that we willfully ignore in this country.

IBM introduces the PC and, with Microsoft, releases DOS ("640K ought to be enough for anyone" — Bill Gates 1981) <https://quoteinvestigator.com/2011/09/08/640k-enough/>

"Residential services will depend on high-speed Internet access. High-speed today is 100 Kbps to 900 Kbps. This will increase in the future to 1 Mbps to 10 Mbps for each household." - Pearson 2001

<https://www.pearsonhighered.com/assets/samplechapter/0/1/3/0/0130281360.pdf>

"We don't like their sound, and guitar music is on the way out." — Decca Recording Co. rejecting the Beatles, 1962.

<https://quoteinvestigator.com/2013/04/27/guitars-out/>

So my own personal computers memory went from 640k to 64 gigabytes in approx. 25 years. About a 10k% increase. My telecommunications speed has gone from 1200kbps to 400mbps in approx. 35 years. About 3k% increase.

Here is what your competition would be like if we had a free and open market:

(You know what I mean here, that whole invisible hand of the free market thing that Republicans like to talk endlessly about)

- Verizon FiOS Gigabit Connection provides 940/880 Mbps speeds for \$69.99 /mo.
- AT&T Internet 1000 940/880Mbps \$60 /mo.
- Gigabit Internet by XFINITY from Comcast 1 Gbps/35 Mbps \$70.00 /mo.
- Gigabit Pro by XFINITY: 2Gbps/2Gbps (Fiber To The Home / FTTH) **OMG!**

In the end, it seems to me that Charter/Spectrum would benefit from Cranium-Rectal inversion surgery to be able to fully grasp the need to build a fully fiber optic gigabit symmetric network into the homes of your customers. Once this medical operation is complete, you may just discover that worshiping at the altar of Wall Street is in fact a death cult, and that we humans do in fact have a higher purpose than to be coin-operated carbon based lifeforms.

Signed, an unhappy customer 4/5/2021

PS. Hey Charter, one of your tone deaf and clueless competitors just threw in the towel. Here is your chance! And it looks like there is another Federal corporate welfare program coming to you in the new infrastructure bill. Charter, and now you want to add data caps put in place as a condition of your merger? You are deploying asymmetric 1gbps fiber? 940mbps down and 40 mbps up? Really?

AT&T Lobbies Against Nationwide Fiber, Says 10Mbps Uploads Are Good Enough (arstechnica.com) 192

Posted by [BeauHD](#) on Monday March 29, 2021 @08:01PM from the don't-fight-it-embrace-it dept.

AT&T is [lobbying against proposals to subsidize fiber-to-the-home deployment across the U.S.](#), arguing that rural people don't need fiber and should be satisfied with Internet service that provides only 10Mbps upload speeds. Ars Technica reports: *AT&T Executive VP Joan Marsh detailed the company's stance Friday in a [blog post](#) titled "Defining Broadband For the 21st Century." AT&T's preferred definition of 21st-century broadband could be met with wireless technology or AT&T's [VDSL](#), a 14-year-old system that brings fiber to neighborhoods but uses copper telephone wires for the final connections into each home.*

"There would be significant additional cost to deploy fiber to virtually every home and small business in the country, when at present there is no compelling evidence that those expenditures are justified over the service quality of a 50/10 or 100/20Mbps product," AT&T wrote. (That would be 50Mbps download speeds with 10Mbps upload speeds or 100Mbps downloads with 20Mbps uploads.) AT&T said that "overbuilding" areas that already have acceptable speeds "would needlessly devalue private investment and waste broadband-directed dollars." "Overbuilding" is what the broadband industry calls one ISP building in an area already served by another ISP, whereas Internet users desperate for cheaper, faster, and more reliable service call that "broadband competition."

PSS. Here is yet another example of the kind of wrong-headed thinking going on these days:

ISP Imposes Data Cap, Explains It To Users With Condescending Pizza Analogy (arstechnica.com) 85

Posted by BeauHD on Friday April 02, 2021 @06:00PM from the poorly-thought-out-illustrations dept.

An anonymous reader quotes a report from Ars Technica:

Cable company WideOpenWest (which markets itself as WOW!) yesterday told customers that it is imposing a data cap and explained the change with a pizza analogy that would seem more appropriate for a kindergarten classroom than for an email informing Internet users of new, artificial limits on their data usage. The email said WOW is "introducing a monthly data usage plan for your Internet service on June 1, 2021" and described the system as follows:

"What's a monthly data usage plan? Let us illustrate ... Imagine that the WOW! network is a pizza. Piping hot. Toppings galore. Every WOW! customer gets their own slice of pizza, but the size of their slice is dependent on their Internet service plan. While customers who subscribe to 1 Gig get the largest slices, those with Internet 500 get a slightly smaller piece, and so on. But, it's all the same delicious, high-speed pizza that you know and love. Now, say you're not full after your slice and you grab another. That extra slice is like a data overage. Don't worry -- we got extra pizza... umm, data... just in case. If you exceed your data allowance, we'll automatically apply increments of 50GB for \$10 to your account for the remainder of the current calendar month. Total overage charges will not exceed \$50 per billing statement no matter how much data you use. Even better -- the first time you experience a data overage, we'll proactively waive fees."

The email did not mention that, unlike pizza, Internet data doesn't run out and that there is plenty for everyone as long as a network is properly constructed and provisioned. And despite paragraphs of comparing data to pizza, the email literally never says how much data customers will be allowed to use before they are charged extra. The answer is in a newly updated "network management practices" document that says the monthly cap will range from 1TB to 3TB: the 50Mbps download plan gets 1TB, plans between 100 and 300Mbps download speeds get 1.5TB, the 500 and 600Mbps plans get 2.5TB, and the gigabit plan gets 3TB.

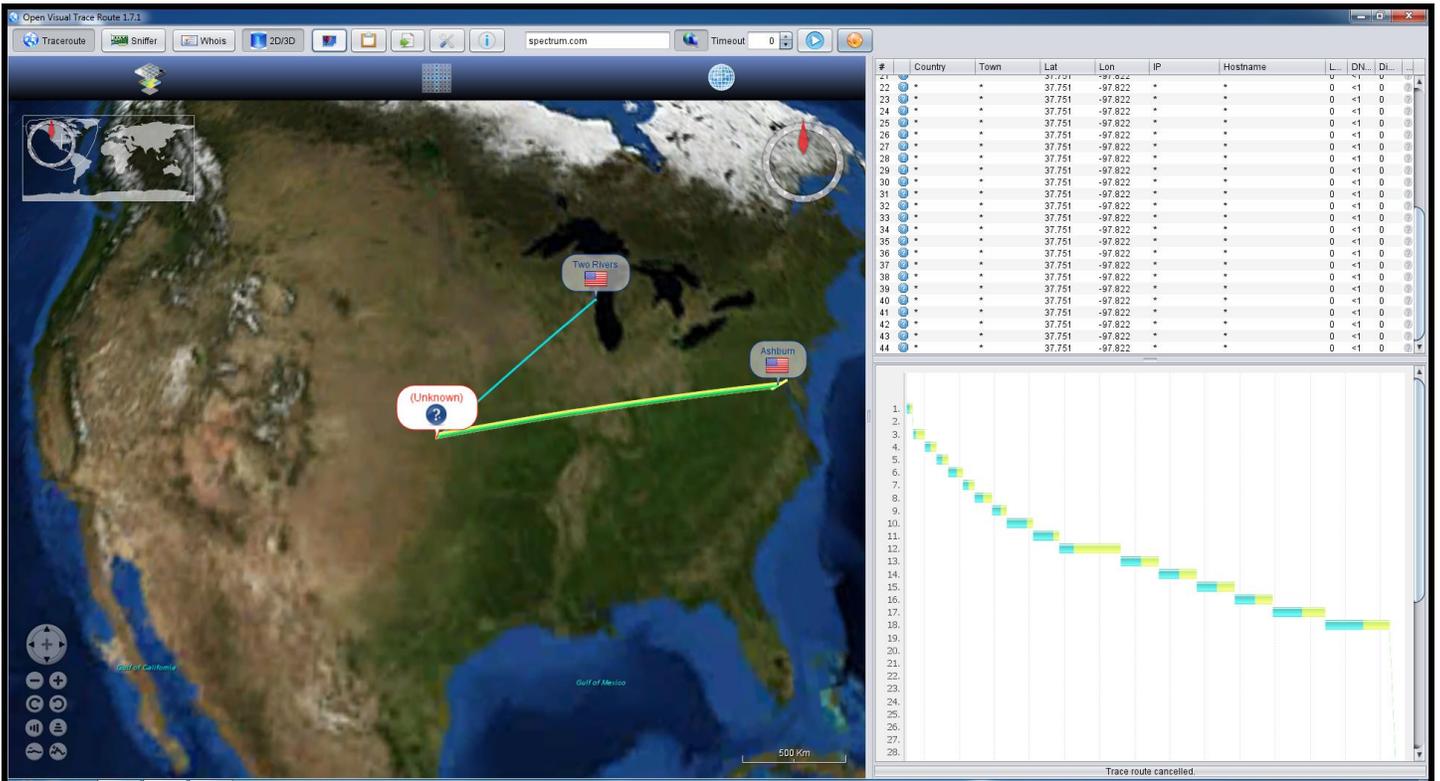
WOW has over 800,000 internet customers in parts of Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, South Carolina, and Tennessee. In a separate document, WOW says that "unlimited data plans may be added for an additional monthly charge" but doesn't say how much it will cost.

It's apparently not a bad April Fools' Day joke, either. People in the DSLReports forum have reportedly confirmed the changes with a WOW representative.

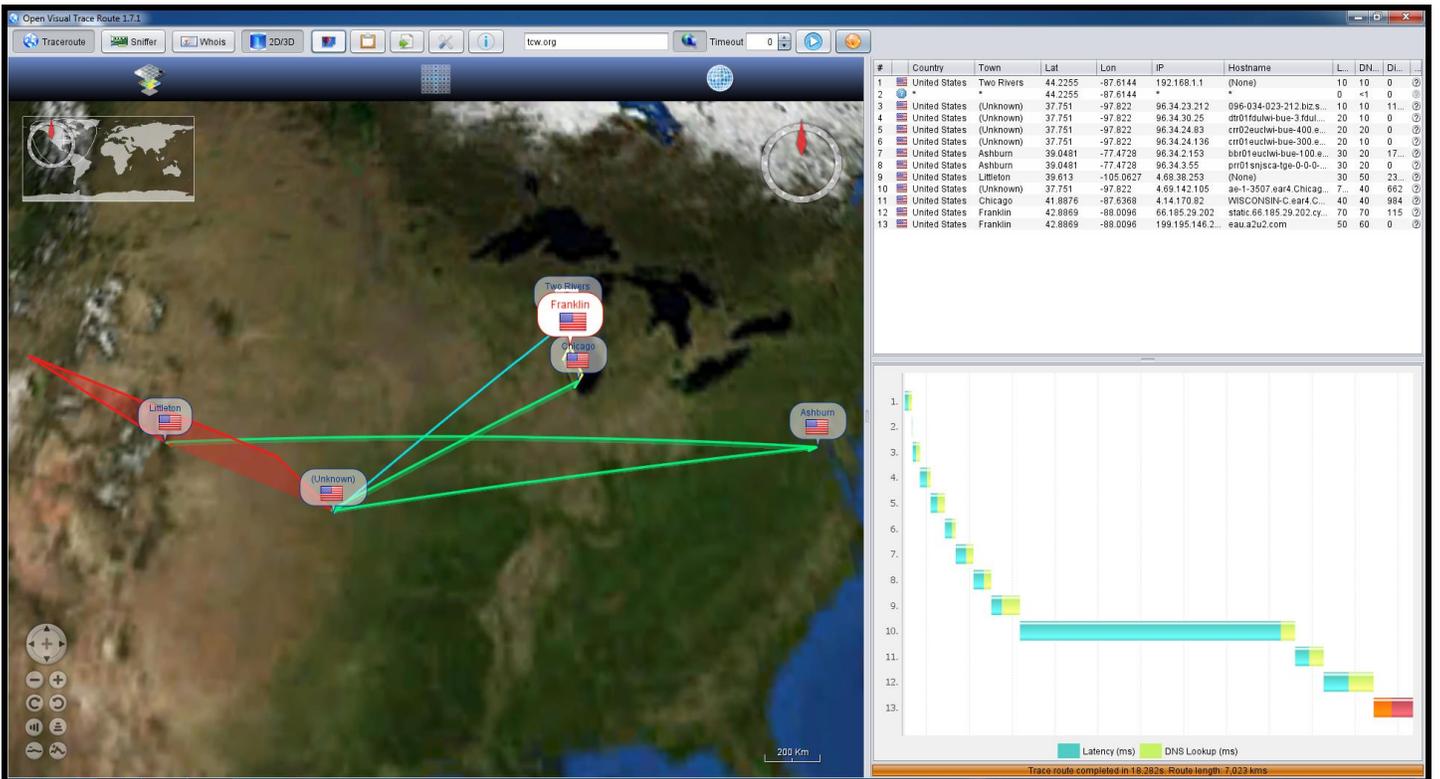
Reference

[Telecom Book of Broken Promises](#)

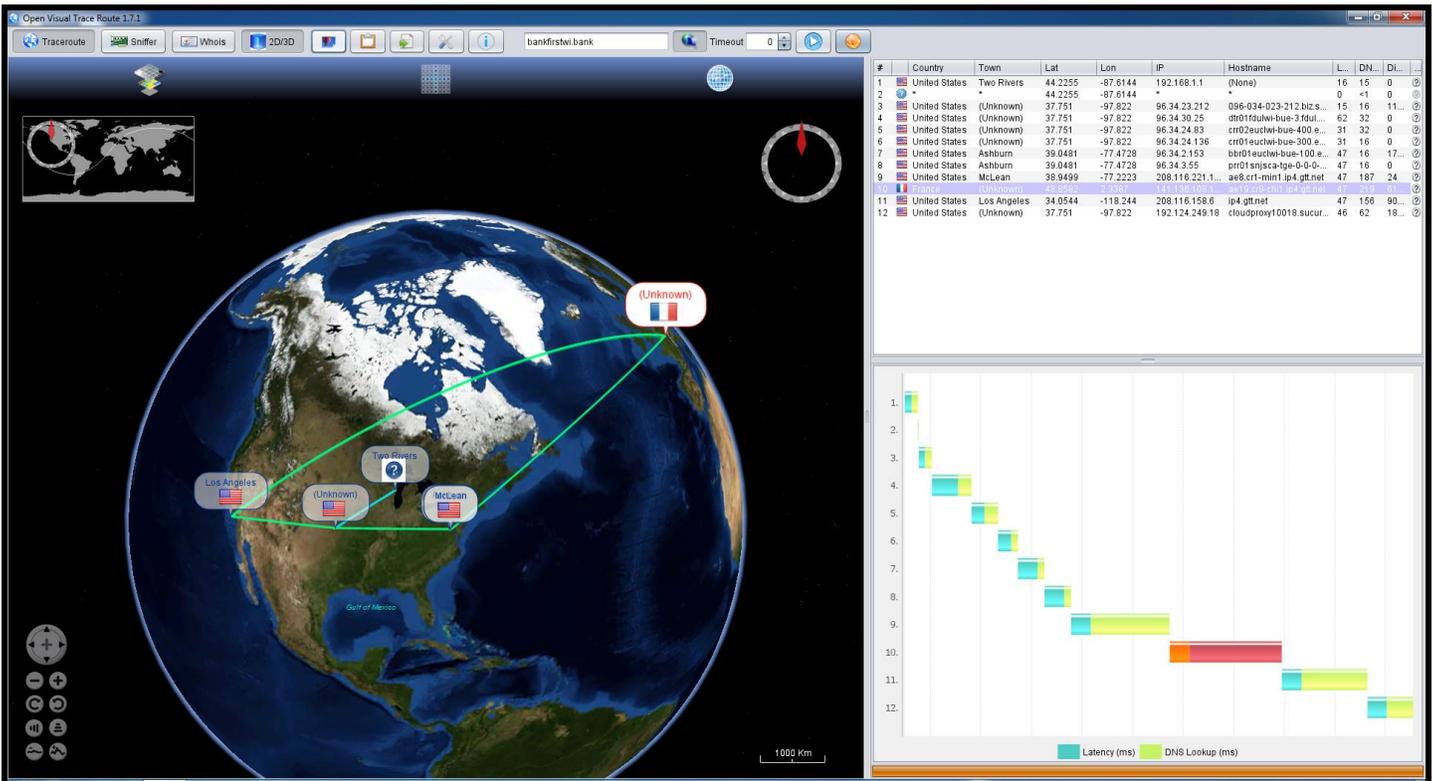
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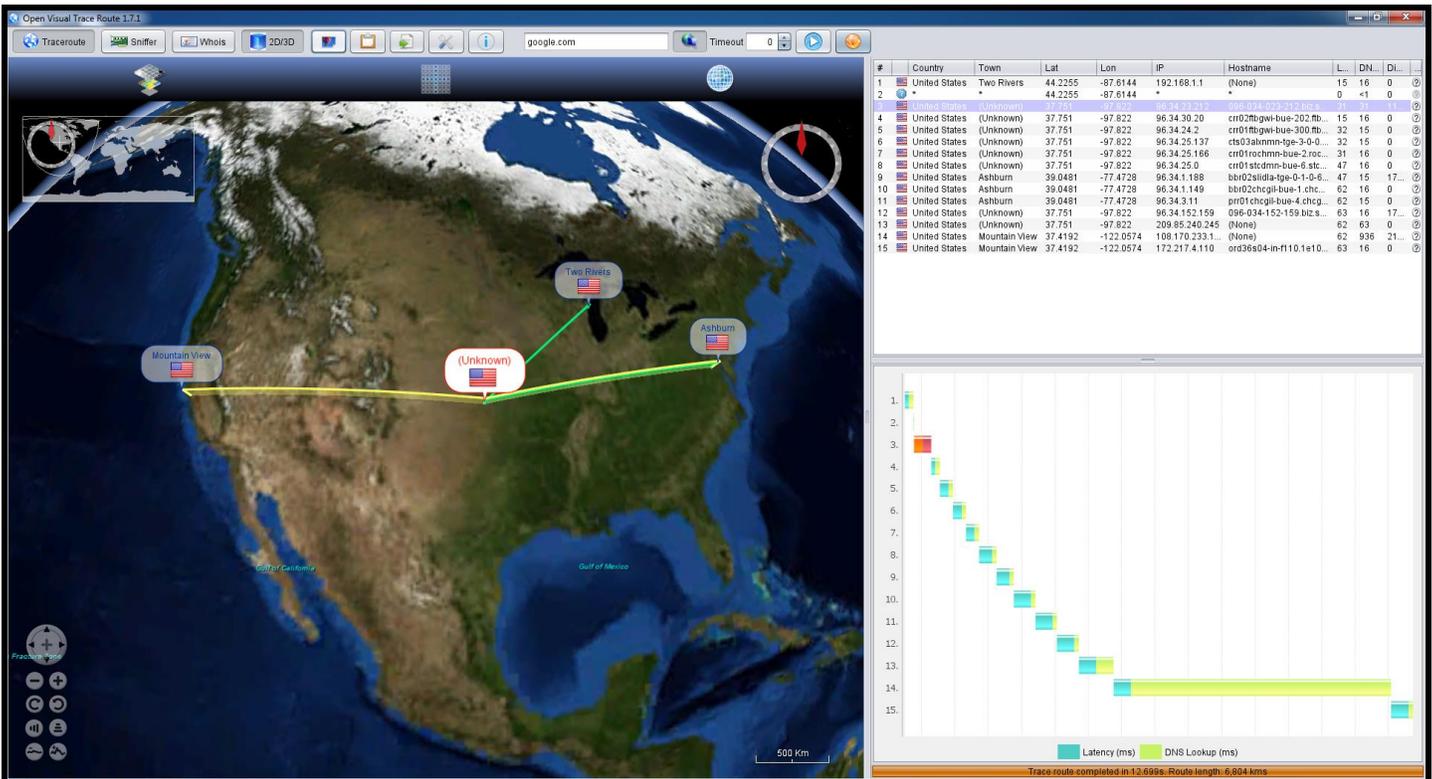
To Spectrum.com



To my website and email hosting



To my bank 10 minutes away via Germany



To Google just for a reference

“We are in the middle of a pandemic. So much of modern life has migrated online. As a result, it has become painfully clear there are too many people in the United States who lack access to broadband. In fact, if this crisis has revealed anything, it is the hard truth that the digital divide is very real and very big”

<https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/FCC-21-18A3.pdf>