

# Comcast accelerates area service expansion

As Comcast upgrades services in Oregon and Washington, competitor Qwest races to keep up

By Caron Alarab  
News Reporter

Whenever Jos Vaught needed to use the Internet last year, he drove to Knight Library or resorted to his roommate's dial-up service because he couldn't get anything faster.

"It's in kind of an old neighborhood," the University senior said of his Polk Street residence.

At the time, local high-speed Internet providers Comcast and Qwest could not service his home because of coverage limitations statewide. And although the Internet service providers have always recognized the need to expand to reach more people like Vaught, it was Comcast who got there first with a recent statewide upgrade.

"We just happen to be ahead of the game in the Northwest," Comcast spokesman Dan Williams said of the early completion this summer.

Since its "friendly acquisition" of AT&T Broadband last November, Comcast — the largest broadband Internet provider in the United States — has been committed to an accelerated

expansion of services. Over the last three years, the company has spent nearly \$300 million on service upgrades in Oregon and southwest Washington alone. On a more local level, 11.5 percent of the 117,000 residents who are currently eligible for broadband Internet in Eugene subscribe to Comcast.

Meanwhile, Qwest has worked hard to catch up.

Last spring, the phone and DSL Internet service provider announced an incremental \$75 million expansion campaign for its 14-state region.

"We're doing what we can to expand," Qwest spokeswoman Silvia McLachlan said, although she couldn't reveal the company's current market share. "Eugene is a key market for us."

In order to qualify for Qwest DSL in Lane County, the actual phone wire connecting a household to the central office must be less than 18,000 feet long or within a three-mile radius. Although she couldn't divulge the location of the central office or the number of Eugene residences that are currently eligible for DSL, McLachlan said students can call Qwest at (800) 244-1111 or go to [www.qwest.com](http://www.qwest.com) to check the availability of an address or home phone number.

"Stay tuned," she said for those out-

side the coverage area. "Hopefully your home will be implemented soon."

Qwest's advice doesn't surprise Williams.

"Phone companies have been telling customers to 'hold tight' for some time now," he said. "With broadband high-speed Internet, all you need is a cable TV line to qualify."

By high-speed, Williams means a 1,500 Kbps download speed for about \$55 a month with basic cable television. Qwest offers a maximum 640 Kbps download speed for a similar price, though a phone line is required.

Williams said having the higher speed is Comcast's key advantage in student communities.

"It's primarily broadband users who are downloading lots of music," he said.

As if 1.5 megabit isn't fast enough, Comcast is currently testing double the downloading speed — over 3 megabit — in markets in Atlanta and Pittsburg for the same price. Williams said the project is just one of several ways Comcast is trying to improve its services. "This is a very competitive market," he said. "We'll have to stay competitive to stay in business."

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## THE CABLE/DSL COMPARISON

Here are just a few factors that set these ISPs apart

	COMCAST BROADBAND	QWEST
Internet provider since:	1999	1997
Offers:	Cable Internet	DSL through an established phone line
Download Speed:	1.5 Mb/1500k	640k or 256k
Service availability depends on:	If you can get cable TV	If your phone wire is less than 18,000ft from the central office
Budget:	\$300 million in Oregon and Southwest Washington over last 3 years	\$75 million in 14 states (including Oregon) starting this summer

SOURCES: Comcast and Qwest  
Kim Premore Graphic Designer

## WHAT TO DO IF YOUR PARTY STARTS TO GET OUT OF CONTROL



1. Call the police yourself if uninvited guests disrupt your party or if your guests won't pay attention to your requests to behave and obey the law. Call before things get too out of control. Police will view your trying to keep things under control as a preventive measure.
2. Respond positively if a police officer comes to your house. The officer is most likely responding to a complaint. Make sure the person interacting with the police officer at the front door is sober and able to be responsive to their requests. Do as much as possible to comply with what the police are asking you to do. Enlist the help of your friends and housemates.
3. Interfering with a police officer makes a bad situation worse. Do not physically resist the officer under any circumstance. Use common sense and cooperate. Don't throw bottles at or near police officers. If you have committed a crime and a police officer asks you to identify yourself, you need to do so. Always tell a police officer your name if asked. Giving a false name is a separate offense and will likely escalate what might have been a citation into a trip to jail.
4. Understand that you can be arrested. A police officer may take someone into custody for any violation of law that carries a potential jail penalty. This includes most state criminal laws and many city ordinances. For some violations, an officer may detain you while verifying your identity and issuing a citation.
5. When a police officer asks you to clear an area, leave right away. If you stay around after the warning to watch what's happening, you may be cited for interfering with a police officer. If police warn that they are going to use tear gas, you need to get as far away as fast as you can.

Brought to you by: Office of Student Life, ASUO, and Eugene Police Department

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