Internet Speed Tests and Down Site Detection
By John Tan

There are FREE web tools to check your Internet speed and "down" sites/apps from your computer, tablet, or smartphone. These tools are safe and have been used for years by amateur techies, Internet Service Providers (ISP), and IT professionals alike to diagnose network issues or favorite apps not loading.

How slow is slow? First check your ISP's bill to see what bandwidth/speeds are in your contract. Usually they are "up to" speeds, not guaranteed to be a maximum speed. Secondly, consider checking with your ISP; they can run a test on their side to determine if your internet speed is having issues. The ISP will "restart" your modem to complete the speed tests. If you have a obsolete or problematic router or modem, they will let you know.

Or you can test your speeds on your own. In your browser, go to www.speedtest.net. Select the server location for the test. Once you see the GO button, click on it to test. It will give you results: latency (delay) and both upload and download speeds in Mbps, which stands for megabits-per-second.

Whether your speed is adequate is a personal judgement and is based on what you usually do on the Internet. If a site can't be opened fast enough or if you can't stream video or Zoom reliably, it's too slow. A test result below 15 mbs for downloads and 5 mbs for upload may be considered fast for one person, but it's not fast enough for most home uses, especially for streaming video or for Zoom.

Another useful application is Downdetector.com. This site will detect apps/sites that are having problems with the Internet. Enter the app in question, for instance Facebook. It's quite interesting to see where outages can affect other cities and states. You can also submit a down site if you wish.

ISPs serving Oakmont are Comcast (xfinity), AT&T, and Sonic. AT&T and Sonic speeds are very location-dependent due to the type of technology used and the length of copper wire in their shared infrastructure. Comcast uses fiber/coax technology, and speeds are not location-dependent within Oakmont. For more information or an electronic copy of this article and previous articles, visit oakmont-learning.org or oakmontvillage.com.