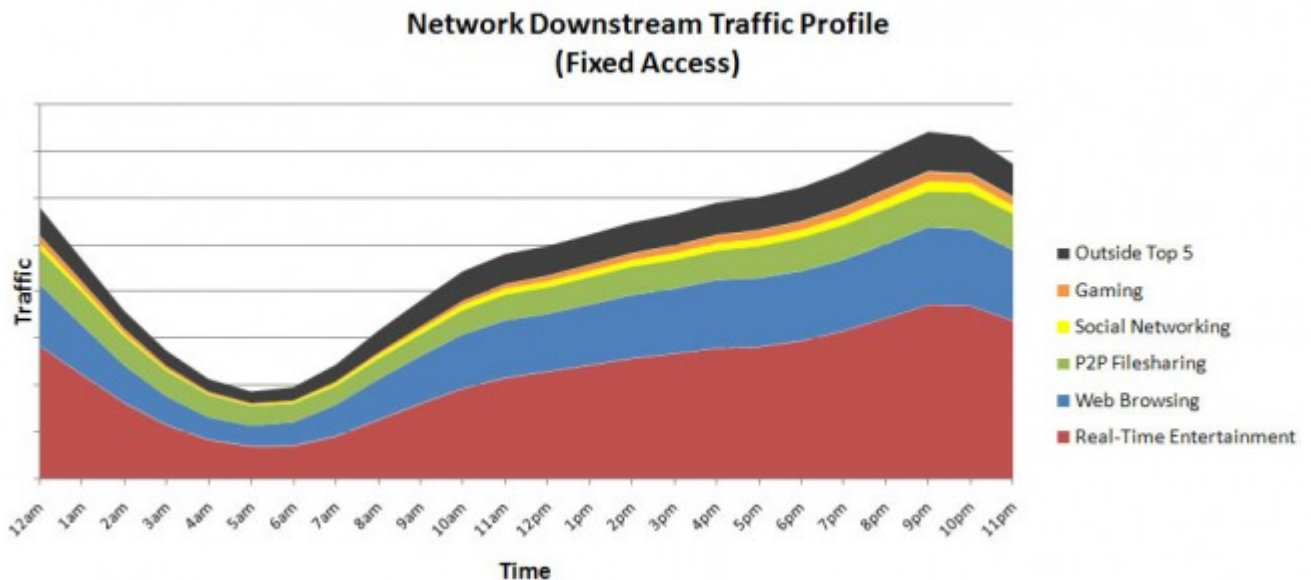


WIRED

Netflix Instant Accounts For 20 Percent of Peak U.S. Bandwith Use

By [John C Abell](#)

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Netflix instant accounts for 20 percent of all non-mobile internet use during prime time in the United States, according to a new study.

Streaming media — real-time entertainment — accounts for 43% of peak period traffic in the U.S., according to Sandvine, which helps ISPs manage their networks and thus has access to buckets of information about usage patterns.

But Netflix alone accounts for nearly half of that between 8 and 10 p.m., and that usage comes from only 1.8 percent of the service’s subscribers.

“Per-user, Netflix is the heaviest user of downstream bandwidth in North America: the average fixed access Netflix connection is 1 megabit per second,” Sandvine said in reply to an e-mail question. “On mobile networks, per user, only Slingbox (at almost 800 kbps) is heavier than Netflix (~125 kbps).”

Streaming video is the most bandwidth-intensive use of the internet, but there are plenty of other choices — starting with YouTube. So the dominance of Netflix, which only offers “studio” fare, would seem to indicate that there is an enormous appetite for profession programming delivered from the cloud.

Good news for Hulu, Amazon Unbox and even YouTube, should its movie rentals service gain traction. Better news for the content creators, assuming they can come up with a killer streaming revenue model and as if they needed any more proof that on-demand, internet delivery is the future. Bad news for cable and satellite — protestations by CEO Reed Hastings notwithstanding.

But Hastings does see that streaming is the engine for Netflix now. “In fact, by every measure, we are now primarily a streaming company that also offers DVD-by-mail,” Hastings said in conjunction with the company’s earnings report Wednesday [[pdf](#)]. “At the same time, the introduction of our streaming offering in Canada in late September has provided us with very encouraging signs regarding the potential for the Netflix service internationally.”

The study is the eighth Sandvine has published since 2002.