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The trash-talked coaxial cable that ribbons America's streets and neighborhoods for cable TV has a new life. Comcast, Intel, and the industry consortium Cable Labs have developed [internet speeds](#) that could allow someone to stream 2,000 Netflix movies into their home at one time. And while they predict their speed will blow away wireless firms' heavily marketed 5G coming this year, cable executives maintain that the two services would be complementary — cable for the WiFi-connected home and 5G for mobile.

Company officials say 10 gigabit-per-second speeds over the internet will be "field tested" in two years and ready for millions of consumer homes by the mid-2020s on the existing cable network, with tweaks and new modems. "The common question is: 'What is a consumer going to do with 10G today?'" said Phil McKinney, Cable Labs chief executive officer. "In reality, nothing." McKinney added that no one anticipated YouTube or Netflix until high-speed streaming became available over the internet.

Comcast, one of the nation's largest internet providers, and Intel say that the 10G speeds could lead to "immersive experiences" and connect dozens of devices over WiFi. Homes will have 50 WiFi-connected tablets, laptops, smart phones, and home-automation gadgets by the early 2020s, according to industry estimates. Company officials say that 10G could be used for derivatives of virtual reality, esports, or streaming the images of 40 cameras or more simultaneously over the internet.

Comcast and Intel announced 10G at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas on Monday night. Comcast expects to field test the 10G speeds in 2020 and deploy it within a few years to homes. Some of the Comcast technology is expected to be developed in Philadelphia. "We don't have to dig up streets and we don't have to dig up yards," said Tony Werner, president of technology and product experience in Comcast's cable division, in a phone conversation on Monday. He said that Xfinity internet customers would need a new modem.

But other than that, Comcast's basic network infrastructure, a hybrid of fiber lines and coaxial cable, would be used for what the industry is marketing as 10G. The 10G speeds can be attained through super-high-fast digital processing and coding, Werner said. Fiber is light-based, and coaxial is electric-based. McKinney said that the existing cable network would support 10G speeds on the internet "without needing to invent anything."

Kevin Werbach, a Wharton legal studies professor with an expertise in internet and telecommunications, said on Tuesday that the cable companies could theoretically upgrade the network to 10G. "But how much of this is marketing and how quickly consumers will see this is an open question." McKinney noted that "a lot of people have written off coaxial cable but it is extremely efficient when moving large amounts of data."

Through the last 10 or 15 years, Verizon and others have said that light-based fiber telecom lines were the only future for high-speed internet and would kill cable's coaxial lines. Verizon pumped billions of dollars into fiber-to-the-home and marketed the service as Verizon Fios. But cable companies continued to boost speeds over the coaxial lines and competed with fiber, though it was never clear how fast cable could make its coaxial and fiber network go.

Verizon has basically halted the build-out of Verizon Fios and sold off large parts of its land-based infrastructure, except for areas in the northeastern United States, including the Philadelphia area. Verizon, AT&T, and other wireless companies now promoted 5G service for smart phones as the next new thing. This 5G stands for "fifth-generation" wireless services and not the bit speed itself of the service. Verizon's 5G service is expected to range between 300 megabits per second and 1 gigabit per second, or one-10th the speed of what the cable firms are promising. – *Philadelphia Inquirer*

Verizon Communications Inc. continued to expand its base of wireless phone subscribers in the final quarter of 2018, a period in which smartphone makers Apple Inc. and Samsung Electronics Co. have warned investors they would fall short of expectations. Verizon said Tuesday that it added a net 650,000 new postpaid phone connections during the period, an increase from the net 295,000 new phone connections added in the third quarter.

The carrier benefited from customers adding more lines per account and its "mix-and-match" family plans that allow subscribers to pick and choose the amount of data they need, Ronan Dunne, executive vice president and president of Verizon Wireless, said at a Citigroup Inc. analyst conference. He added that the carrier was also benefiting from a "stretch in participation" that led to new older and younger subscribers.

Citi analysts expected the largest U.S. carrier by subscribers to add 400,000 net new phone subscribers during the period. Verizon's additions underscore the diverging fortunes of wireless carriers and the companies that manufacture smartphones. So-called postpaid customers pay their bill at the end of the month under long-term contracts and are seen by carriers as valuable because they provide a stable source of revenue.

Device makers like Apple and Samsung, meanwhile, are contending with consumers holding on to their devices longer and fallout from the unbundling of wireless contracts in recent years that broke the typical two-year cycle of upgrading devices and service contracts simultaneously. Verizon shares were up about 3% in early afternoon trading Tuesday. – *Wall Street Journal*

Following reports that Americans received 48 billion robocalls last year, state [Sen. Andy Dinniman](#) (D-Chester) is introducing legislation to target the practice. "I know that for many residents, myself included, sometimes it seems like all 48 billion calls came to their own homes," Dinniman said. "These automated phone calls basically bombard you to the point of harassment. And some even employ legally questionable practices and serve as a haven for scammers targeting the elderly."

Dinniman said he is drafting legislation that will target and rein in robocalls by:

- Allowing consumers to permanently sign up to the "Do-Not-Call" list without requiring them to re-register every 5 years.
- Prohibiting telemarketing robocalls on legal holidays.
- Requiring telemarketers to set up procedures to allow residents to immediately opt out of calls via automated procedures at the beginning of the call. If a robocall is left on voicemail, telemarketers must provide a call-back number and way to opt out.
- Working to crack down on spoofing, in which telemarketers use equipment to mimic local numbers or even the recipient's own number to make distant calls display as local numbers on caller ID.

Dinniman said he will also work with the Pennsylvania Attorney General's office to find new and innovative ways to crack down on robocalls and enforce existing legislation. He also said he plans to lobby for stronger Federal Communications Commission (FCC) fines and penalties for illegal robocalls and violations.

According to YouMail, a robocall management company that tracks the volume of calls, robocalling surged 60 percent in the U.S. last year. In December 2018 alone, Pennsylvanians received an estimated nearly 160 million robocalls – that translates to 60 calls per second and about 10 calls per person. Scams make up an estimated 40 percent of those calls, according to YouMail. "The fact that consumers pay for telephone service only to have it co-opted by aggressive telemarketers, shady sales pitches, and scammers is reprehensible," Dinniman said. "The massive influx and skyrocketing growth of robocalls calls for stronger measures, effective enforcement, new authentication and blocking technologies, and better procedures to stop unwanted calls and hold illegal callers and scammers accountable." "We have a right to live our own lives in our own homes without annoying outside intrusions," he added. – **West Chester Daily Local News**

The 2019 Pennsylvania Farm Show, the nation's largest indoor agricultural showcase, **is well underway** and being covered exclusively by PCN for the 25th consecutive year. PCN of course is funded by Pennsylvania's participating cable systems that voluntarily carry its programming as a public service. Don't miss the exclusive coverage of the 103rd Pennsylvania Farm Show on the nation's preeminent statewide public affairs network – PCN!

