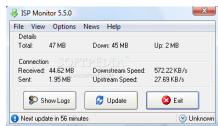


25 June 2007

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ISP Monitor main window

## [How Fast Is Your Internet?](#)

### *See the ups and downs of your Internet*

Getting your real Internet speed used to be a very time consuming task. The resources for the job were scarce and the procedures were lengthy in time because of the low speeds. A difference of more than 20 KB automatically required a new test. The final result was obtained by calculating the average of all the results. More than often the final answer was just an idea of the truth. Now the investments in Internet infrastructure built some years ago are fully exploited and the speeds are dazzling (well, there is always room for better but today's limitations will have to do for now). When it comes to learning the bandwidth provided by your ISP the errors are minimal and the results are more accurate. The multiple tools for testing the Internet speed offer quite a sum of options and some of them are even free. ISP Monitor is one of a multitude of freewares on the market that can provide you with accurate information on how fast is the Internet going into your computer and the speed on its way out. Used for non-commercial purposes the application is absolutely free and the fact that it is now Vista compatible only adds to its value. The version tested today (5.5.0) is not a final release although it sure does not feel like it. The interface is simple enough and there is nothing to stand out save the information displayed. The developer traded the good looks over functionality and ease of use and I must say that he did a real bargain. If you don't take a peek in the Settings menu and make some adjustments all the values will be static and frozen to zero. All there is needed for those values to jump up and down is to define your network adapter. So tap into Options menu and choose Settings. From the Traffic Monitor alternative choose Adapter and select the network connection settings. If your ISP is supported by the application (currently there are ISPs from Belgium and Netherlands only) you can select it right after installing the application, from the appropriate window. Giving this information to the software will cause it to grab the statistics directly from your provider's website. This option is specially important when you are imposed a download limit. Additional options for this option allow receiving a warning when you reach the limit of the account or whatever value you impose. Also, when that limit is reached you can configure the application to send you an e-mail or simply disconnect the connection. Settings area let you control the way ISP Monitor works. Thus you can configure it to start in minimized mode with Windows, show on taskbar when it is active, automatically install the updates, check your mail on startup and even news on some websites incorporated in the application (these can be edited and new web locations can be added with the least effort). ISP Monitor comes equipped with a Traffic Monitor window which can be in turn customized to display the graph in one of the three modes available (2D, 3D or Histogram), set the graph overhead, configure it to show statistics, scale and define the colors for upstream, downstream and upload/download. To make it look niftier you can apply it a transparency level and set it to become opaque at mouse hovering. All the colors for the Traffic Monitor window can be changed. The color code comes in very handy when it's been a while using the application. A glance at the Traffic Monitor could give you a good idea on the network activity. Mail Checker utility is designed to alert you when you got new mail. For this you have to configure an account. There is nothing fancy about it as the software can trace changes in a regular POP3 protocol. After making all the settings you can test on the success of the connection. The actions to be taken at clicking on a pop up or the tray are starting the default mail client, start an external program, open a certain website or remove the icon. The feature I liked the most is the speed test tool. This instrument will detect the speed limits for both download and upload imposed by your ISP. There is no hard task and all there is to it is press a button. Of course, preliminary preparations need to be made for

the results to be as accurate as possible. All Internet activity has to be stopped before running the test. That is close your web browsers and other bandwidth-eating applications and proceed to the test. The Disk Monitor is a little tool incorporated in ISP Monitor and shows disk activity (read/write activity) and the status of each volume on your disk(s): amount of free space and total amount of space for each drive and the sum of all disks available on your machine. **The Good** The application is reliable enough for testing the Internet speed given by your ISP. Despite its beta state, the application moves and feels great. The additional options like Mail Checker, Disk Monitor and Traffic Monitor are simply adding more value to the software. Testing the Internet speed is as simple as pressing one button. **The Bad** The list of supported ISP is restricted to those in Belgium and Netherlands. The lack of a Help file and the fact that 90% of the forum is not in English makes it very difficult even for an average user to understand how the software works and to make the most of it. Disk Monitor cannot be closed from its own window and needs to be hidden from the main application window. There is no taskbar item for the main application window and if you place another window on top of it there is no way to make it visible again but to minimize that window. That is pretty nagging if you open more than one window and suddenly need to take a look at ISP Monitor. **The Truth** Great application with great functions and tools. Advanced users should have no problem using it and average ones will need a while to understand its intricacies. Creating a Premium account permits sharing your statistics and get a look at the other users' ones. As a bonus you will be given five signature bars (containing statistics) and get access to more premium services. *Here are some snapshots of the application in action:*