

# The Mayor of Gigabitville

Gigabit speed has become an obsession. Do users need it? No.  
Should providers offer it? Yes.

By Bryan Rader / *Bandwidth Consulting LLC*

On a recent business trip, I landed very late at night. For a moment, as I exited the plane, I couldn't even remember what city I was in. Was it Dallas? Chicago? Las Vegas? I rubbed my eyes and walked into the terminal, hoping to see a big billboard welcoming me to Vegas, Dallas or the Twin Cities.

When I passed through the door and into the airport terminal, a young representative smiled and said, "Welcome to Gigabitville." She handed me a brochure, which read, "The fastest network on Earth. Stop by our visitor's booth and register to be first to get a gig." I quickly headed to the baggage claim.

I looked around Gigabitville to see what this was all about. I couldn't believe it. All the natives were carrying three or more mobile devices and streaming, gaming and browsing all at once. One local was repeating to himself, "I love my gig. I love my gig." Another was bragging about his recently completed speed test. "Look at this download! Look!"

What kind of place was this? I jumped into a cab and told my driver to take me to a quick drive-through for some late-night treats, as I hadn't eaten anything but peanuts. "You want a gigabit burger, gigabit nuggets or a gigabit sub? The gigabit sub is like a foot-long, but bigger."

After I took a quick bite of the gigabit sub (which was not bad, by the way), my cabbie dropped me off at my hotel. The front desk clerk greeted me as I entered the lobby. "Welcome! We've upgraded you to the gigabit suite on the top floor. Have a great evening!"

Should I expect a gigabit mint on my pillow too? I wondered. Everyone in Gigabitville is drinking the Kool-Aid. They are all obsessed!

## WE'RE ON A MISSION

The broadband industry is the same way right now. If you walk around an industry conference, everyone seems to be from Gigabitville, on a mission to get a gig. "I must have a gig. I must have a gig."

Since 2010, Google Fiber has transformed the industry by introducing "gigabit" to its lexicon. Google turned the gigabit from a speed level into a brand. Now every other service

provider has launched a gigabit-themed product. Can you name half the companies that offer these products? GigaPower. G1GABLAST. Gigabit Pro. GigaSpeed. GigaLink.

This is definitely GigaOverdone.

Gigabit has been added to today's must-have marketing features list. Want to sell more bread? Call it gluten free. Want to push more multivitamins? Say they have probiotics. Want to sell more of anything? Just say organic, preservative free, same-day shipping or gigabit speed.

It's happening everywhere, not just in Gigabitville. Multifamily professionals are obsessed too – owners, managers, developers, end users, condo boards. Everyone is humming, "Gig-a-bit, gig-a-bit. I-need-it. I-need-it."

Possibly the only people who don't agree are the engineers. "Why does everyone want a gig?" they ask. "They can't even use it."

Yes, we know. Netflix requires only 5 Mbps for HD. Hulu Plus and HBO Now ask for only 3 Mbps. Amazon Prime prefers 3.5 Mbps. So the engineers ask, "Why do you want 1,000 Mbps?" The marketing folks tell them, "Guys, you just don't get it."

Well, I get it. I could be the mayor of Gigabitville. It's not about the need or the requirement. It's about desire. It's about being bigger, better, faster. Why climb the tallest mountain? Because it's there. Ever see someone leave Costco with 500 rolls of toilet paper? Why do people do that? Because it's a bigger, better deal.

Getting a gig is emotional, egomaniacal, cocktail-party touting. It's about being first on the block. And now it's become the most important product a broadband provider can offer. All of us are becoming robots chanting, "Get-a-gig. Get-a-gig."

On that late-night flight, I didn't land in Dallas or Vegas. I landed in Gigabitville. I thought I was a visitor. But now I realize I am actually just like the locals. I might even be the mayor! ❖

*Bryan Rader is CEO of Bandwidth Consulting LLC, which assists providers in the multifamily market. You can reach Bryan at [bryanjrader@yahoo.com](mailto:bryanjrader@yahoo.com) or at 636-536-0011. Learn more at [www.bandwidthconsultingllc.com](http://www.bandwidthconsultingllc.com).*