

State of Mobile Networks: Brazil (August 2015)

Brazil's operators are getting little rest after last year's FIFA World Cup. The Rio de Janeiro Olympics are a year away, and in the intervening two years, Brazil's 4G services are taking shape. Using data gathered from more than 80,000 mobile subscribers, OpenSignal took a deeper look at the major Brazilian data networks and found some surprises.

Report Facts

176,644,833
Measurements

82,568
Test Devices

May 1 - Jul
31, 2015
Sample Period

Brazil
Report
Location

Highlights

Claro wins the speed crown

América Móvil's Claro outpaced its competitors in raw 4G bandwidth, delivering average speeds of 17.82 Mbps. No operator in Brazil, however, averaged less than 10 Mbps in download speeds.

4G availability still lacking

None of Brazil's Big four operators were able to maintain a 4G connection more than 50 percent of time, showing they have much more work to do before LTE becomes ubiquitous.

Network availability is outstanding

No matter what network they're connected to, Brazilian smartphone users experienced a complete lack of signal less than 3 percent of the time. Now if only Brazil can maintain that kind of service reliability during the Olympics.

3G data availability is widespread

4G still may be ramping up in Brazil, but 3G data connectivity is fairly commonplace. In particular, Nextel, Vivo and Claro all supplied a 3G or better data signal in more than 80 percent of OpenSignal's tests.

Awards Table

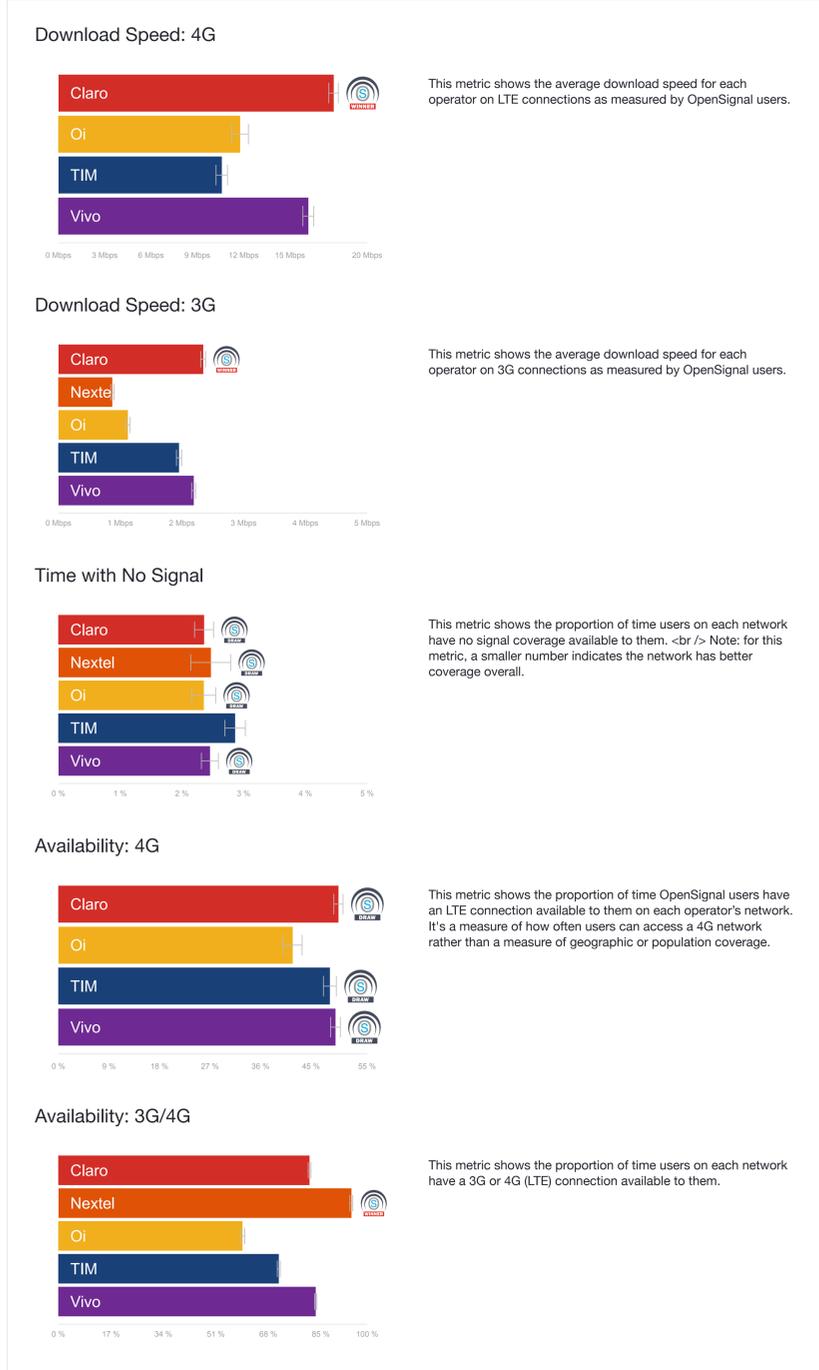
Operator	Download Speed: 4G	Download Speed: 3G	Time with No Signal	Availability: 4G	Availability: 3G/4G
Claro	🏆	🏆	🏆	🏆	
Nextel			🏆		🏆
Oi			🏆		
TIM				🏆	
Vivo			🏆	🏆	

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Performance by Metric



Analysis

The 2014 World Cup was a trial by fire for Brazil's fledgling 4G networks, and there were plenty of complaints levied against the country's operators about the quality and consistency of their service during the month long sporting extravaganza. Brazilian operators, however, are getting a second chance – and two more years to prepare – to prove the mettle of their mobile data networks in next year's Rio Olympics.

As the 2016 Summer Olympics' official sponsor, Claro has the most to gain or lose in this global showcase, but according to OpenSignal's research it's also the most prepared. The third largest operator won the highest ranks in four out of five categories, measuring LTE and 3G speeds and availability (*) and overall network availability. But in almost every case, the country's largest service provider, Telefónica's Vivo, was on Claro's heels.

Brazil's main LTE rollout didn't get underway until 2013, but its operators have considerable 4G progress in the intervening two years. LTE speeds well exceed the global average of 11.7 Mbps, and even in the short two-month time window of this study, we saw LTE performance noticeably improve on three of the top four operators' networks. Of course, this is a trend we often see when new 4G networks come online. Right now Brazil's LTE service isn't heavily loaded. As operators sign up more 4G subscriptions and their networks become more congested, those speeds will likely come down.

Right now Brazilian subscribers are getting an LTE signal on about half of all data sessions. That's nothing to scoff at considering Brazil's 4G market is still young, but Brazilian operators still have some work to do before LTE comes truly pervasive. That said, Brazil has some decent 3G networks for consumers to fall back on. Only one operator, Nextel, averaged 3G speeds less than 1 Mbps, and three of them were able to supply a 3G or better data signal more than 80 percent of the time. Also, Brazil's mobile users experienced relatively little time out of range of signal availability compared to other developed countries.

Of course, three months out of a typical Brazilian winter will be nothing compared to three weeks of Olympics festivities. By this time next year, we'll know just how prepared Brazil's networks are.

(*) **Editor's note:** In June of 2016, OpenSignal changed the name of its availability metric to network availability. Availability measures the same thing as availability – the proportion of time users remain connected to a particular network – but we felt that availability was a better reflection of the metric's definition. For more details see our [methodology page](#).

Our Methodology

OpenSignal measures the real-world experience of consumers on mobile networks as they go about their daily lives. We collect 2 billion individual measurements every day from tens of millions of smartphones worldwide.

Our measurements are collected at all hours of the day, every day of the year, under conditions of normal usage, including inside buildings and outdoors, in cities and the countryside, and everywhere in between. By analyzing on-device measurements recorded in the places where subscribers actually live, work and travel, we report on mobile network service the way users truly experience it.

We continually adapt our methodology to best represent the changing experience of consumers on mobile networks and, therefore, comparisons of the results to past reports should be considered indicative only. For more information on how we collect and analyze our data, see our [methodology page](#).

For this particular report, 176,644,833 datapoints were collected from 82,568 users during the period: May 1 - Jul 31, 2015.

For every metric we've calculated statistical confidence intervals and plotted them on all of the graphs. When confidence intervals overlap for a certain metric, our measured results are too close to declare a winner in a particular category. In those cases, we show a statistical draw. For this reason, some metrics have multiple operator winners.

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