

State of Mobile Networks: Colombia (July 2017)

OpenSignal's first State of Mobile Networks: Colombia report comes at a time when the Colombian Government's Vive Digital, or Live Digital Plan has encouraged sizeable investment in mobile broadband development. Our first report on the country looks at mobile operators Claro, Movistar and Tigo and bases its conclusions on more than 134 million measurements taken from 9,165 smartphones using the OpenSignal app.

Report Facts

134,094,476
Measurements

9,165
Test Devices

Feb 28 -
May 30,
2017
Sample Period

Colombia
Report
Location

Highlights

4G-availability tie for Movistar and Tigo

Our data shows Movistar and Tigo users experience almost exactly the same 4G signal availability, with users able to access signal between 62.2% and 62.3% of the time.

Claro and Movistar share our 4G speed award

All three major operators in Colombia exceeded the global download speed average of 16.2 Mbps in our tests. But we measured the fastest speeds on Claro and Movistar, which were statistically tied for first place with measured average download speeds just below and above 20Mbps.

3G speeds – everyone's a winner

In the 3G speed stakes, there was little to separate Claro, Movistar and Tigo, with users on all three networks experiencing pretty much the same 3G download speeds of around 3Mbps.

Best 3G and 4G responsiveness: Tigo

Tigo secured our first-place awards in both 3G and 4G network latency categories, as our testers measured the fastest reaction times on both its LTE and HSPA networks.

Awards Table

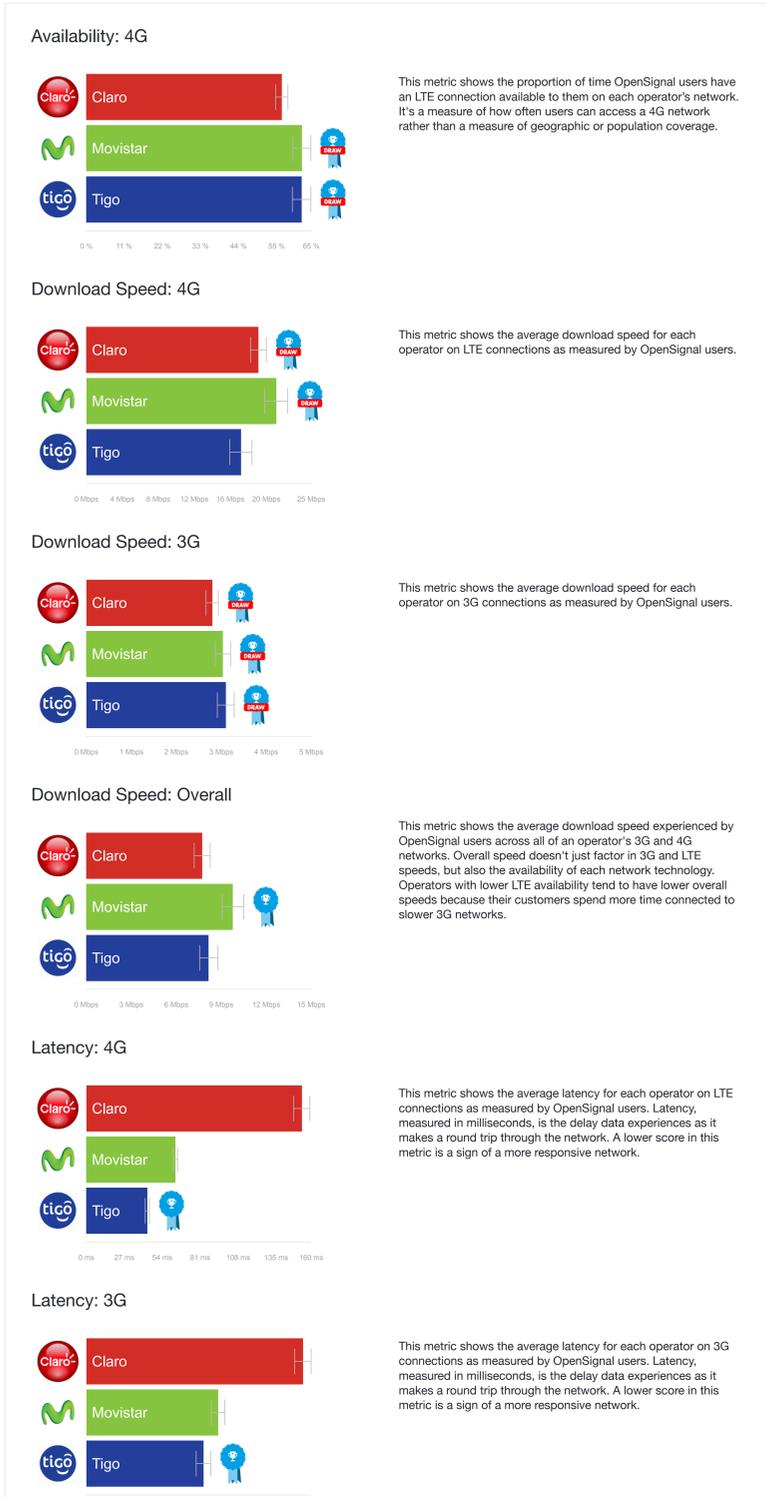
	Download Speed: 4G	Download Speed: 3G	Download Speed: Overall	Latency: 4G	Latency: 3G	Availability: 4G
Claro	🏆	🏆				
Movistar	🏆	🏆	🏆			🏆
Tigo	🏆	🏆		🏆	🏆	🏆

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Enjoyed our report? All our analysis is based on real measurements collected by millions of mobile network users. No simulations, no approximations: just real-world experience.

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Performance by Metric



Analysis

To say mobile communications is an important part of current developments and growth in the Colombian economy – the fourth largest in Latin America - would be an understatement. According to the GSM Association (GSMA) in its most recent [overview on the country](#), the equivalent of 3.8% of GDP was generated in 2016 by mobile technologies and services, totalling around US\$10 billion. The GSMA projects this figure could grow to US\$13 billion and 4.2% of GDP by end 2020.

These financials are likely testimony to the continuing efforts and impacts of the ongoing Colombian Government's [Vive Digital plan](#) and makes this an ideal time for our first State of Mobile Networks: Colombia report. We've focused on the leading three operators: América Móvil's Claro, Telefónica's Movistar and Millicom's Tigo. Over the 3-month period between Feb 28 to May 30 this year, OpenSignal took 134 million measurements from 9,165 smartphones using our OpenSignal app and analyzed six metrics: 4G service availability, download speeds (4G, 3G and overall), as well as 3G and 4G latency.

Test results in detail

Taking 4G availability first, our data showed Movistar and Tigo to be neck and neck in a statistical tie for first place, with users on both networks able to avail of 4G services between 62.2% and 62.3% of the time. Second place Claro scored just above 56% in 4G availability. According to our most recent [State of LTE report](#), 50 countries had overall 4G availability scores higher than 63%, so all of Colombia's operators clearly have some work to do. But these improvements are likely only a matter of time away, as the government forges ahead with its Vive Digital efforts.

In our 4G download speed category, our data showed Claro and Movistar had only 2 Mbps separating them, Claro offering download speeds of 19.1 Mbps and Movistar providing users average connections of 21.1Mbps, making it a statistical tie for first place. We measured average 4G download speeds on Tigo at 17.2Mbps, but all three operators beat the global 4G download average of 16.2 Mbps, measured in our LTE report.

As for 3G, well, with little to separate the download speeds of our three operators, Claro, Movistar and Tigo, we declared all three winners in another statistical tie. Our results showed that users on these three networks experience 2.8 Mbps, 3.0 Mbps and 3.1 Mbps download speeds, respectively.

Our third speed category looked at overall download connection speeds, which along with 3G and 4G download speeds also takes network availability into account. In our measurements, Movistar was the clear winner in this metric with its users experiencing an average download of 9.8 Mbps, while Claro and Tigo averaged overall download speeds of 7.7 Mbps and 8.2 Mbps, respectively.

Lastly, we looked at network latency, which measures the delay, in milliseconds, that data experiences on its end-to-end journey through the network. In both 3G and 4G categories Tigo took the top prize. Its measured 3G latency of 104ms was some 13ms ahead of Movistar and way ahead of Claro's rather poor 193ms. For 4G, our Tigo users had an excellent experience with latency of only 43.4ms, 20ms ahead of Movistar and 110ms ahead of Claro.

Colombia – Steadily Catching Up

With its Vive Digital program driving change in the country, there is every likelihood that Colombia will improve its position in mobile communications world rankings in the coming years, though at the moment it still ranks at the low end of our global results. In OpenSignal's State of LTE report, Colombia's 4G availability places it in the lower third of countries we track, although the country as a whole performed better in our 4G-download-speed results.

According to the GSMA, Colombia's mobile operators incentivized by the government's digital agenda, are reported to have invested US\$9 billion in network improvements and spectrum since 2010. A further US\$5 billion of capital investment by the operators is predicted over the next three years, which will lead to increased coverage and capacity. In fact, Claro actually announced its [LTE expansion plans](#) late last year, with the aim to reach 100% nationwide LTE coverage by 2018, less than five years since it launched its 4G network. It also expressed its intentions to roll out LTE-Advanced and 5G technologies to meet growing user demand for faster mobile broadband speeds.

Colombia's adoption of mobile broadband still lags behind others in the region, but mobile broadband connections are forecast to rise to 69% by 2020, at which time 67% of all mobile connections in the country are expected to be using smartphones. The country's regulating authorities announced they would be [releasing new spectrum imminently](#) and increasing existing spectrum caps, all of which will increase 4G capacity for users in both urban and remote regions.

All in all, with the Colombian Government's continued support for digital inclusion, together with the predicted continuing operator investment in their networks, OpenSignal sees the story unfolding in Colombia as a positive one.

Our Methodology

OpenSignal data is collected from consumer smartphones and recorded under conditions of normal usage. As opposed to drive-test data, which attempts to simulate what a user might experience by using the same devices to measure network performance in a small number of locations, we take our measurements from millions of smartphones owned by regular people who have downloaded OpenSignal's apps.

Those measurements are taken wherever users happen to be, whether indoors or out, in a city or in the countryside, representing a mobile data service the way users experience it. For more information on how we collect and analyze our data see our [methodology page](#).

For this particular report, 134,094,476 datapoints were collected from 9,165 users during the period: Feb 28 - May 30, 2017.

All data has been collected from users of the OpenSignal mobile app for [Android](#) or [iOS](#).

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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