

CDN Cost Cheatsheet

The 4 meters, the 3 contract structures, the 7-line quote checklist, the rules of thumb.

1 — The four meters on a CDN bill

<p>1. Data Transfer Out</p> <p>Bytes the CDN ships to viewers. Measured in GB/month. Largest line on most bills.</p> <p><i>Pay-as-you-go:</i> \$0.085/GB (US/EU). <i>Negotiated:</i> \$0.005-\$0.030/GB.</p>	<p>2. HTTP(S) Requests</p> <p>Manifest + segment fetches. HLS players make ~12 requests/min per viewer.</p> <p><i>\$0.0075-\$0.0100 per 10k requests. HTTPS ~33% higher than HTTP.</i></p>	<p>3. Peak Bandwidth (95th %)</p> <p>Gbps peak after the top-5% sample discard. Drives transit + premium deals.</p> <p><i>\$0.30-\$1.50/Mbps on transit; bundled in premium CDN commits.</i></p>	<p>4. Origin Egress</p> <p>Bytes origin sends to CDN on cache misses. Free same-cloud; \$0.05-\$0.09/GB cross-cloud.</p> <p><i>Cache hit ratio is the single highest-leverage number on this line.</i></p>
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

2 — The three contract structures (formulas)

<p>Pay-As-You-Go</p> <p>bill = Σ (bytes in tier × tier rate)</p> <p>Pre-launch, < \$5k/mo. Never above \$10k/mo.</p>	<p>Committed Use (12-36 mo)</p> <p>bill = $\max(\text{commit}, \text{usage}) \times \text{rate} + \text{overage} \times \max(0, \text{usage} - \text{commit})$</p> <p>Predictable VOD or steady live. 25-60% discount typical.</p>	<p>IP Transit / 95th-percentile</p> <p>bill = $\max(\text{CIR}, \text{95th-Mbps}) \times \text{\\$/Mbps}$</p> <p>Peak live workloads. Short bursts inside the 5% discard are free.</p>
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

3 — Seven-line quote checklist

- 1. Committed per-GB rate at my projected volume, by region.
- 2. Overage rate — flat multiplier or graduated? Negotiate at signing.
- 3. Request-fee schedule — HTTPS specifically.
- 4. Origin-egress cost from each origin location to the CDN.
- 5. Origin shield / tiered caching price (included or paywalled?).
- 6. SLA, credit formula, exclusion list.
- 7. Term length, true-up cadence, exit clause.

4 — Rules of thumb for the streaming engineer

- 92% cache hit ratio is the floor for cost-controlled streaming.
- Origin shield typically pays for itself in cycle 1 above 500 TB/mo.
- Multi-CDN saves 10-25% reliably above \$50k/mo CDN spend.
- South America CloudFront = 2x US/EU rate. APAC = 1.2-1.5x.
- Switching CDN without same-cloud origin adds \$3k-\$6k/mo egress.
- Headline pay-as-you-go is 2-3x the negotiated commit rate.