

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

1. Data Transfer Out

Bytes the CDN ships to viewers. Measured in GB/month. Largest line on most bills.
Pay-as-you-go: \$0.085/GB (US/EU).
Negotiated: \$0.005–\$0.030/GB.

2. HTTP(S) Requests

Manifest + segment fetches. HLS players make ~12 requests/min per viewer.
\$0.0075–\$0.0100 per 10k requests. HTTPS ~33% higher than HTTP.

3. Peak Bandwidth (95th %)

Gbps peak after the top-5% sample discard. Drives transit + premium deals.
\$0.30–\$1.50/Mbps on transit; bundled in premium CDN commits.

4. Origin Egress

Bytes origin sends to CDN on cache misses. Free same-cloud; \$0.05–\$0.09/GB cross-cloud.
Cache hit ratio is the single highest-leverage number on this line.

2 — The three contract structures (formulas)

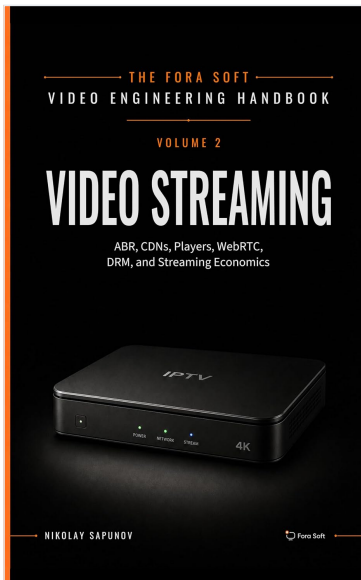
Structure	Formula	Best for
Pay-As-You-Go	bill = Σ (bytes in tier × tier rate)	Pre-launch, < \$5k/mo. Never above \$10k/mo.
Committed Use (12-36 mo)	bill = max(commit, usage) × rate + overage × max(0, usage – commit)	Predictable VOD or steady live. 25-60% discount typical.
IP Transit / 95th-percentile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

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.



GO DEEPER · VOLUME 3 OF 7

Video Streaming: A Complete Guide to Video Delivery

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This sheet explains the four meters on a CDN bill, three contract types and the quote questions to ask. Volume 3 goes further into delivery: CDN caching and origin shields, ABR ladders that drive egress, player QoE and the full economics of streaming at scale.

WHAT YOU WILL FIND INSIDE

- CDN caching and origin shield
- ABR ladders that drive egress
- Delivery economics and contracts
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