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Broadband customers receiving half the speed for which they pay

Apr 17 2008

Broadband customers are still receiving less than half the download speed they pay for, according to research out yesterday.

Companies are delivering an average of 48 per cent of their advertised download speed, according to comparison website broadband-expert.co.uk.

The study tested 41,230 UK broadband connections during February and March, comparing the actual speed customers were achieving against the maximum speed quoted for their package.

It revealed significant differences between providers and found packages quoting lower maximum speeds were more likely to be accurate. Providers who promised to deliver speeds of 16Mb were actually achieving an average of 8.6Mb, the study found.

Customers on 2Mb packages achieved on average 1.8Mb or 88 per cent of the quoted maximum speed, while customers on 8Mb received 3.4Mb or 43 per cent.

The best performers in the 2Mb category were Virgin Media's cable service, Talk Talk and UK Online, who all delivered slightly more than the advertised speed.

Even the poorest performers, Tiscali, Pipex and Toucan, achieved 68 per cent, 70 per cent and 73 per cent respectively.

In the 8Mb category, O2 and Be achieved 73 per cent and 68 per cent of advertised speeds, compared to two per cent for Toucan and 29 per cent for Virgin Media's ADSL service and Eclipse.

Virgin Media's cable service achieved the fastest speed in the 16Mb+ category with an average of 10.4Mb or 52 per cent of the 20Mb top speed. The only other provider to deliver more than 50 per cent of the advertised maximum speed was UK Online, which achieved 62 per cent of the 16Mb top speed, delivering an average of 9.99Mb.

Broadband Expert technical director William Harvey said: "It seems clear that providers are promising speeds far greater than they are capable of delivering. If the providers set a realistic expectation of the speeds that can be achieved, they are much less likely to upset consumers than those who advertise fast speeds and under-deliver.

"There are a number of factors that affect broadband speed but when you see such large differences between the top performing providers and the under-achievers, it is clear that this is down to much more than the usual excuse of poor line quality or the customers' distance from their local exchange.

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