

Service and speed are biggest broadband gripes

Submitted by: Genie Ventures

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Broadband speed and service are key complaints, says Broadband Genie

The most common causes for broadband dissatisfaction are speed and customer service, according to research carried out by broadband comparison website (<http://www.broadbandgenie.co.uk>) Broadband Genie. The results throw up some interesting differences when compared to Ofcom's recent research into broadband speed and satisfaction.

Ofcom's report found that speed of connection (30 per cent), unreliability of connection (27 per cent) and cost (14 per cent) made up more than 70 per cent of the main reasons for customer dissatisfaction with their ISP. Customer service being unhelpful made up just six per cent of the overall total of main reasons.

However, the most common causes for comment at www.broadbandgenie.co.uk were connection speed and customer service being unhelpful, with 37 per cent of respondents remarking on each one within their feedback to the site during this period. Of these remarks, there were three times as many complaints as positive comments. The same ratio applied to comments on connection reliability (75 per cent of comments received were negative), although the amount of consumers commenting on reliability was just 20 per cent. Value for money was a smaller consideration for customers, with just six per cent making a remark about their ISP. Of these though, all were negative.

From feedback supplied by 100 consumers on fixed-line broadband:

Comments, Reason given (positive, negative)

37, Speed (9, 28)

37, Customer service (7, 30)

20, Reliability of connection (5, 15)

14, Technical support (2, 12)

07, Cost of calling customer service (0, 7)

06, Value for money (0, 6)

Commenting on the results, Broadband Genie editor Chris Marling said:

"I was surprised to see customer service rank so low in Ofcom's results for main reasons of customer dissatisfaction. In our experience, reading both positive and negative comments left on our broadband comparison website by consumers, good customer service can make or break the customer experience. Whether a customer is dissatisfied with an ISP's connection speed, reliability or perceived value for money, a skilled customer service representative can calm the situation and often resolve - or at least adequately explain - a situation."

The conclusion of Broadband Genie's research would seem to be backed by analysts. In its recent survey of

500 broadband "decision makers", Strategy Analytics found customer support to be the biggest complaint. Strategy Analytics' Ben Piper commented to Broadband Genie:

"As the UK market matures and competition intensifies, the strategy will shift from attracting 'new connects' to one of customer retention. Customer and technical support are key areas of differentiation."

Marling agreed, adding:

"Fixed-line broadband is reaching saturation point in the UK and faces increasing threats to its marketing share from mobile broadband technologies. Forecasts indicate that while the average spend per broadband user will go up, the total number of users will go down. This means churn will become increasingly important and as speeds improve, reliability strengthens and costs fall, customer service will become a key battleground in ISPs retaining customer numbers."

Analysts at Analysys Mason told Broadband Genie its fixed-line broadband individual end-user spend forecasts show very slight overall growth in UK between 2008 and 2014, but overall the total number of fixed-line customers is sharply negative.

Ofcom declined to comment.

Broadband Genie analysed data from customer feedback gathered during the same period as Ofcom's speed tests (October to November 2008), focusing on both positive and negative reactions to varying aspects of their broadband experience. As with Ofcom's results, the analysis was carried out across a broad range of ISPs and results of individual providers have not been released. Comments could be made about any number of subjects, rather than just the main one, and could be both positive and negative.

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

1. Broadband Genie is the UK's leading independent broadband and mobile broadband comparison website, providing consumers with an unbiased source of information on broadband prices and contracts and allowing them to compare broadband providers in an independent. Broadband Genie was launched in March 2004 as the first dedicated consumer comparison site for broadband, while Mobile Broadband Genie was the first independent mobile broadband comparison site, launched in October 2007. Both sites are among the most popular sites in their respective fields, and regularly feature in the national press.

www.broadbandgenie.co.uk / mobile.broadbandgenie.co.uk

2. All queries and interview requests should be directed to Chris Marling at Broadband Genie: t 0844 415 5531 / f 0871 6618553 / m 07908 327303 / chris.marling@genieventures.co.uk