

Fixed-line broadband performance quarterly updates

Ofcom maintains a panel of residential fixed broadband users in order to enable it monitor the performance of UK fixed-line broadband connections. This panel has been in place since 2008, and panellists connect a measurement unit, which is provided by SamKnows,⁽¹⁾ to their broadband router. These measurement units run tests to measure various metrics such as connection speed, latency, jitter and packet loss. These metrics can help determine the user experience of undertaking online activities over a broadband connection. The results of all the tests are recorded .

Although these tests are run on a continual basis, up until now Ofcom has only published six-monthly reports, which are based on test results recorded in two measurement periods each year (May and November). Ofcom has decided to issue two additional data releases each year, which are based on tests run in the months of August and February. These data releases include details of the performance of panellists' connections on a per-panellist basis, along with comparisons of the performance of a number of popular ISP packages. This will allow consumers and internet service providers to monitor broadband performance on a more regular basis.

The data is presented in a raw, basic format. It does not include UK averages, rural/urban splits or splits by geographic market or technology (as the existing six-monthly reports do). The test result collection methodology for the additional data releases is the same as the main reports:

- the averages are based on those respondents who have achieved five valid tests for each metric in each time period within the month.
- the ISP averages contain only respondents who live within geographic markets⁽²⁾ 2, 3 or in the Kingston-upon-Hull area, and within 5,000m from the local exchange.
- For the ISP averages, the only weights applied are distance related and apply to ADSL connections.

The data validation exercise for these additional data releases is different to the 6 monthly releases because they do not contain the overall UK averages and associated processing and validation. As a result there is a slightly greater chance that some panellist ISP package changes (i.e. when a panellist changes from one ISPs package to another) may be missed. As such, the figures in the data releases covering February and August may differ slightly to those in the reports covering May and November of each year and overall UK averages calculated from these data releases should be treated with caution.

Footnotes:

1.-<http://www.samknows.com/broadband>

2.-The geographic markets used are those identified by Ofcom in the *Review of the wholesale access markets: Statement on market definition, market power determinations and remedies*, 3 December 2010. These are:

(<http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/binaries/consultations/wba/statement/wbastatement.pdf>).

Market 1: exchanges where only BT is present or forecast to be present;

Market 2: exchanges where two Principal Operators (operators capable of providing a material constraint in the market) are present or forecast and exchanges where three Principal Operators are present or forecast but where BT's share is greater than or equal to 50%; and

Market 3: exchanges where four or more Principal Operators are present or forecast and exchanges where three Principal Operators are present or forecast but where BT's share is less than 50%.