



## Concern over online tracking

### PRIVACY

The UK's privacy watchdog is investigating technology that tracks websites you visit so details can be sold to advertisers.

Broadband providers BT, Virgin Media and TalkTalk will trial the Webwise service from US company Phorm later this year.

The technology monitors what you browse, and uses the 'behaviour profile' to display adverts on partner websites that appear to match your interests. Advertisers pay Phorm, which shares fees with internet service providers (ISPs).

But privacy concerns have led to the Information Commissioner's Office requesting details of the service from both Phorm and the ISPs involved.

Phorm has defended the system. It says ISP customers' identities are anonymous and no web addresses or search histories are stored – only the general category of sites visited.

Which? Technology Editor Matthew Bath said: 'Such profiling of consumers is worrying. Broadband providers should give clear advice about the service, and provide simple ways to opt out.'

As we went to press, only TalkTalk had confirmed its customers will need to opt in to being tracked.

#### TAKE ACTION!

■ In the coming months, check whether your ISP has signed up to Phorm at [www.webwise.com](http://www.webwise.com) – where you can also switch it off.

Consider the new and growing way to get surfing on the web

## Dongles leading the way online

### TECHNOLOGY

A tiny device known as a dongle is changing the way we go online.

Last month, O2 became the latest company to launch in the increasingly competitive mobile broadband market.

While home broadband is generally better value, as speeds and coverage improve, and prices fall, mobile broadband could prove attractive for people who can't get traditional broadband or don't want to pay out for a home landline.

Rather than using a landline to access the web via broadband, mobile broadband uses the mobile phone network.

You simply buy a small USB stick – or dongle – from a mobile provider and plug

A SELECTION OF MOBILE BROADBAND DEALS				
PROVIDER	CONTRACT (months)	MAX SPEED (Mbps)	USB/DONGLE (£)	MONTHLY COST (£)
3	12	up to 2.8	free	15
ORANGE	24	up to 7.2	free	15
VODAFONE	12	up to 7.2	£79 (modem stick)	15
	12	up to 3.6	£59 (USB modem)	15
O2	18	up to 1.8	free	20 <sup>a</sup>
T-MOBILE	24	up to 3.6	free	15

This is a selection only. Prices may differ, depending on where you buy. <sup>a</sup> Available only to O2 Pay Monthly, Home Broadband and Pay and Go customers. Prices correct at 2 April 2008

Check which networks cover your area

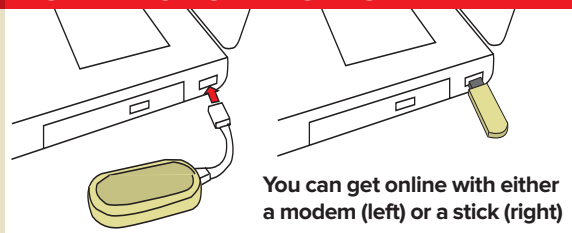
it into your computer. You can then start browsing the web anywhere that has a suitable phone signal.

Orange and Vodafone are currently the fastest options, with download speeds of up to 7.2Mbps, but T-Mobile and 3 have said they'll also increase speeds.

There are various pay-as-you-go and monthly deals available but you need to check which – if any – networks cover your area. Some have coverage maps online.

There is a limit to what you can download a month – from 1GB to 10GB, though most deals have a 3GB maximum. Exceeding limits can be costly – Vodafone charges £15 for every GB over your allowance. And cheaper packages often involve longer contracts.

### HOW A DONGLE WORKS



## BT call cost up 2,000%

### PHONES

Imagine paying £3,000 for an iPod or more than a quarter of a million pounds on a Ford Focus.

While some BT charges were scrapped recently, this is the kind of price rise facing some customers after it hiked

up one call price by more than 2,000 per cent.

Those on BT Together Option 1 used to be able to make a 60-minute weekday evening call for less than 5p. But the company now charges by the minute, so an hour's chat could cost you 96p, unless you're on a 12-month renewable contract.

### A STEEP RISE

Cost of 60-minute weekday evening call – BT Option 1



**61%**

of UK households had access to the internet in 2007

OFFICE FOR NATIONAL STATISTICS

**1 in 4**

bananas sold in the UK are now Fairtrade

FAIRTRADE FOUNDATION

**1,201**

garages have been recommended by members

WHICH? LOCAL



Local sandwich shops offer fruit for less

## Bananas cost a bunch

### FOOD

You may be able to pick up a piece of fruit at a supermarket for less than 20p, but the cost can more than double if you buy it from a sandwich shop.

And if you choose your fruit from a national chain, such as Pret à Manger or Upper Crust, you'll usually pay more.

To check out prices, we visited 28 shops in Glasgow, Manchester, Birmingham and Norwich, including branches of Pret, Upper Crust and O'Briens Irish Sandwich Bar, and independent sandwich outlets.

We found that the most likely price for an apple or a banana at a national chain is 50p, while you're most likely to pay 40p for the same fruits in an independent sandwich shop.

But the national chains were quick to justify their prices.

A spokeswoman for Upper Crust said: 'Our fruit is priced at 50p per item, in line with other retailers within the environments in which we operate.'

'The core product lines at Upper Crust are sandwiches and bakery products – fruit is included as part of a broad range to offer further healthier options and more choice to customers.'

A spokesman for Pret said that its fruit prices were set about two years ago.

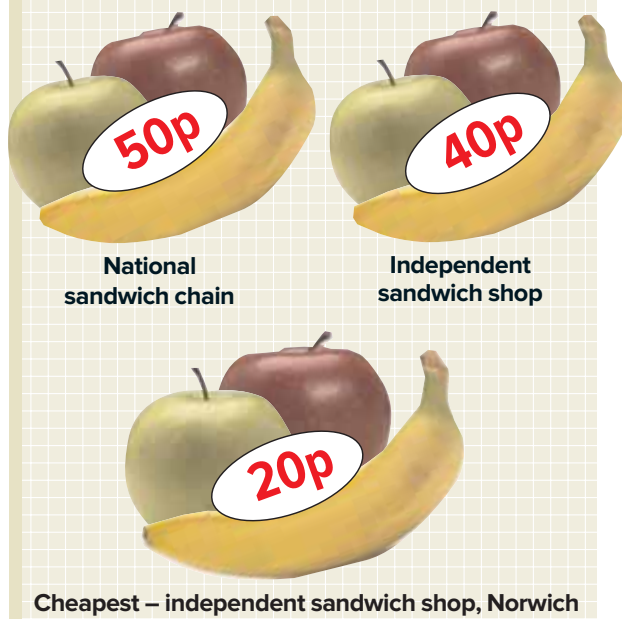
He added that Pret stocked seasonal varieties and that its fruit were 'premium products and the best available at any one time'.

Our hunt for prices on the high street follows our February report (p30) on coffee shops, which also found that national chains were more expensive. The average price of a medium cappuccino, for example, was £2.29 in the most expensive chain compared with £1.48 in independent shops.

### PICK OF THE PRICES

Fruit prices might tempt you to cherry pick where you buy your lunch

#### Typical price of apples and bananas



Our site helped Lee save £528

## Which? members could save you money

### CUSTOMER SERVICE

Thanks to the thousands of you who've made it easier to choose the best local services by nominating companies on Which? Local.

We've celebrated the 11,000th recommendation – and hundreds continue to roll in each month.

Which? set up the website last year to help readers avoid cowboy traders and find reliable businesses. It allows Which? members to post and read reviews about local services across the

UK. You can now read reviews covering more than 270 different trades – ranging from hairdressers and heating engineers to dentists and dry cleaners.

And many users have benefited by discovering the best local businesses and saving money.

One of them, Lee Faulkner, saved £528 on car repairs. After he had difficulty starting his Nissan Almera, the RAC told Lee his stereo was draining the battery.

But a dealer told him the drain was 'within specifications', and he needed a new alternator – for £528.

He found that RJ Auto Services in Bromley was recommended four times on

Which? Local, so he popped in and was given tests free of charge. The results were the same as the RAC tests – the stereo was draining too much power from the battery. So he took his car to an audio specialist and didn't spend money on a new alternator.

He also recommended the garage on Which? Local. Lee wrote: 'The staff spent time on my problem, being very nice in the process, and charged me nothing, saving me from spending £528 on a new alternator.'

#### TAKE ACTION!

Go to [www.which-local.co.uk](http://www.which-local.co.uk) to read and leave reviews of the best businesses around.

