

Broadband bashed

Three in 10 broadband customers are unhappy with how their ISP deals with broadband problems

More than half (57%) of broadband users have had problems in the last year, according to a survey of Which? members. We show the top five problems to the right. Other problems include security issues and bill errors.

Some who experienced problems sorted them out themselves, but nearly six in 10 contacted their internet service provider (ISP) for help. While most problems were dealt with by ISPs in a week or less, 16% took longer and, at the time of the survey, 8% remained unresolved. Worryingly, 31% of members who complained to their ISP were dissatisfied with how it dealt with problems.

Customers of Which? Best Buys Zen Internet and O2 were most satisfied with how problems were dealt with, while customers of Don't Buys AOL, Orange, Pipex and Tiscali were least satisfied.

Which? thinks ISPs should prioritise helping their customers with broadband problems. If you've done all you can to resolve a complaint but your ISP won't play ball, after eight weeks you can contact dispute resolution services Otelo (0330 440 1614) or Cisas (020 7520 3827). If you're unhappy with your ISP, switch to a Which? Best Buy (see www.which.co.uk/broadband).

TOP FIVE BROADBAND PROBLEMS

26%
very slow speeds

24%
repeated or lengthy loss of connection

10%
contacting / resolving queries with ISP

10%
hardware problems

7%
software problems

Source: We surveyed 11,431 Which? online panel members in May 2009.

Don't buy Windows 7 for at least a year

Sales of Microsoft's new operating system, Windows 7, are wiping the floor with its predecessor, Vista, but Which? Computing expert John Bogue advises you not to buy just yet.

He says: 'Software bugs are par for the course for newly released programs, and operating systems are no exception. Unless you like downloading patches and updates, we recommend waiting a year.'

The full version of Windows 7 Premium edition costs £150, but this hasn't put off buyers. Windows 7 has received unprecedented pre-orders – in just 12 hours,

Microsoft sold the equivalent of 25% of the total annual sales of Vista, according to PC World.

Analysts say Windows 7 will owe much of its success to Vista's earlier failure. 'Vista was a bit of a nightmare for Microsoft, and people didn't buy it,' said Jeremy Davies, senior analyst for Context.

Windows 7 promises to be less resource-hungry than Vista and, Microsoft claims, will even run on low-cost netbooks (see www.which.co.uk/netbooks).

For answers to your Windows 7 questions, read our guide at www.which.co.uk/windows7.



Which? Computing says don't buy Windows 7 just yet

DOUGHNUT MOMENT

■ Jam doughnuts, biscuits and sausages could be claimed to be healthy under flawed EU proposals. Suggested criteria for fat, sugar and salt levels in foods that can carry health claims are so lenient that Which? wants them completely revised. We have sent doughnuts to key government officials to make the point.



INNOVATIVE BOILERS

■ British Gas is helping to develop a gas-powered household boiler that can generate electricity, as well as provide hot water and heat. Any electricity that you don't use can be sold back to the grid. Production starts this year, with British Gas starting to fit boilers in homes from 2011. Prices have yet to be confirmed.

ADVICE GUIDE

■ If you're considering making energy-saving improvements to your home this winter, such as fitting insulation, it's worth checking whether an energy grant is available to help cover the cost. See www.which.co.uk/energygrants for everything you need to know, including how much money you could be eligible for, and how to apply.



CAMPAIGN VICTORY

■ We've been campaigning for free hospital parking for patients, and the government has announced the intention to phase out charges in England for all in-patients within three years. The plan will be for each in-patient to receive a permit for the length of their stay, which family and friends can use, funded through efficiency savings.