

19th JANUARY 2010

£££s DOWN THE DRAIN ON UNLIMITED DOWNLOAD PACKAGES

- Over 40% of UK broadband customers have a package with an unlimited download allowance.
- Most of those on an unlimited deal are not making full use of their allowance, indicating they could save money by downsizing to a cheaper package.

New research* from Broadbandchoices.co.uk has revealed that although over 40% (43%) of British broadband customers pay for a package with an unlimited download allowance, the vast majority don't take full advantage of this feature. This means they could be paying more than they need to for a broadband service that is unsuitable for them.

Of the respondents with an unlimited data allowance, almost 1 in 10 (9%) said they used less than 1GB per month – a tiny amount. The other results were:

- 21% said they used just 2GB - 10GB per month
- 14% use only 11GB - 20GB
- 9% use between 21GB - 40GB.
- The majority, 37% don't know how much they download in a month.

Michael Phillips, product director at Broadbandchoices.co.uk commented:

“What these stats highlight is the significant disparity between what broadband customers actually need and what they are paying for. Whilst the way we use the internet has changed dramatically over the last few years with the launch of online TV and gaming services, the main bulk of customers still use their connection simply for the basics – emailing, shopping, banking and surfing. These tasks really don't require a high level package with an unlimited download allowance.

“Practical understanding of the issue is a big problem. Whilst awareness of download limits is growing, it is still difficult for customers to quantify what they do – as demonstrated by the 37% of respondents who had no idea at all how much they actually downloaded every month. Broadband providers have a role to play here, as a massive 90% of respondents claimed that their service provider does not help them monitor how much they download. Something as simple as providing a free download monitor would make a huge difference, by allowing customers to identify if they aren't making the most of their allowance.

“Customers can make smart broadband switches to cut monthly charges, saving money on unwanted download limits. For example, Sky offer broadband 'free of charge' for customers of their satellite TV

services, but with a low usage monthly usage limit of 2GB. While Plusnet charge only £6.49 for a 10GB without needing to take a bundle.”

“A service that isn’t being fully utilised is essentially a waste of money. The VAT hike this year has made all households even more aware of the need to trim back on monthly bills wherever possible. I strongly urge any broadband customers who might be overpaying for a service they are not using to really examine their needs and compare their current deal with more relevant, cheaper alternatives. With potential savings of over £200** they certainly have nothing to lose - and could have a lot to gain.”

Broadbandchoices.co.uk’s top tips for reviewing your broadband package:

1. **Track your usage** – use a download monitor to identify your monthly usage. This will give you a reasonable idea of the kind of download allowance you will need.
2. **Be realistic** - consider your habits as a broadband user. The thought of watching TV online and downloading music may sound great fun but how often will you actually do this? If you only intend to use your connection for emailing and general surfing you will only need a basic service.
3. **Compare deals in your area** - package availability and costs vary by postcode. There might be a solution available in your area offering greater savings so use an Ofcom approved comparison broadband calculator (www.broadbandchoices.co.uk) to check out the best deals.
4. **Haggle with your existing provider** - they may have a newer, cheaper deal you can move across to without changing supplier.
5. **Sign up online** - many broadband providers offer additional discounts and incentives if you subscribe online rather than over the phone. Price comparison sites also frequently have exclusive deals negotiated with ISPs, so check an Ofcom-accredited site for the best offers.

Broadbandchoices.co.uk - Best Buy for packages with lower download limits

ISP	Package	Download Limit	Speed (up to)	Call notes	Contract length	Up front costs	Monthly cost	Offer	First year cost*	Notes
Primus	Phone and Broadband Saver	10GB	24Mb	Evening and weekend	18 months	£0.00	£4.99		£59.88	1
Plusnet	Plusnet - Value + Talk Evening & Weekend 20Mb	10GB	20Mb	Evening and weekend	12 months	£4.99	£6.49	Free for 3 months	£63.40	2
O2	The Basics + line rental (PAYG calls)(O2 mobile customers only)	20GB	20Mb	Pay as you go	12 months	£0.00	£8.17	Free for 3 months	£73.53	3
AOL	Broadband + Calls	10GB	8Mb	Evening and weekend	18 months	£0.00	£10.20	Free first month; £5.20 for 2 months	£102.20	4

Source: Broadbandchoices.co.uk

Notes:

Information correct at 19th January 2011

Terms & conditions apply - see ISP sites for full details

*First year cost does not include line rental

1 £4.99 offer exclusive to broadbandchoices.co.uk. You must switch your line rental to Primus for £11.00 per month (BT £13.60)

2 Free for three months, £6.49 thereafter. £6.49 in Plusnet low cost areas only, if you live outside one of these areas it costs either £10.79 or £12.99 after the first three months depending on where you live. You must switch your line rental to Plusnet for £11.99 per month (BT £13.60)

3 Free for three months, £8.17 thereafter. Offer ends 28th Feb 2011. O2 mobile customers only. You must switch your line rental to O2 for £7.66 per month (BT £13.60)

4 Free for the first month, £5.20 for the next two months, £10.20 thereafter. You will need a non cable line to get this package, costing £13.60 from BT.

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*Broadbandchoices.co.uk Broadband Behaviour online survey. 1,300 [broadband users] surveyed November 2010

** Saving based on switching from an unlimited download broadband service and separate line rental service (example: O2 The All Rounder at £17.36 per month and BT line rental at £13.60 per month; ongoing yearly cost £371.52) to a 10GB download limit broadband service and separate line rental service (example: Plusnet Value at £6.49 per month, first 3 months free and Primus Home Phone Saver line rental at £7.99 per month; total first year cost £154.29). Total 12 month saving £217.23. Information correct at 17 January 2011. Plusnet low cost broadband areas only. The services used in this example may not be available in your area. Terms and conditions apply - see provider websites for full details.

For further information please contact:

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About Broadbandchoices.co.uk

Broadbandchoices.co.uk was launched in 2005 and is the UK's leading Ofcom accredited broadband comparison calculator.

We offer comprehensive and impartial advice on broadband, mobile broadband and bundled packages (broadband with home phone and digital TV) and can save our users over £200 when they switch.

The Broadbandchoices.co.uk calculator compares thousands of different combinations of packages and provides results in a clear, intuitive table where users can rank and compare services according to their individual needs.

Users can switch online or by calling our sales team on 0800 232 1279.

Broadbandchoices.co.uk powers over 20 leading comparison services including Confused.com, Comparethemarket.com and GoCompare.com.

Broadbandchoices.co.uk – *working hard to save you money*