

Broadband—it's not all equal

Recent advances in wireless mobile and fixed line broadband have brought much faster connections to many Australians. Unfortunately, limitations on those technologies are leaving some users with a lot less speed than they thought they were paying for.

New smart wireless devices and phones have led to a rapid growth in mobile broadband services. However, factors such as network congestion, distance from the nearest mobile phone tower or local geography can significantly affect the speeds users experience.

Since the introduction of ADSL2+ technology, many fixed line broadband customers are also enjoying higher speed services over the copper wire phone network. ADSL2+ is claimed to have a theoretical maximum speed of more than 20 megabits a second, but under real-world conditions few users experience that kind of speed.

Like mobile broadband, a range of local factors influence the actual speed ADSL2+ customers receive. Speeds typically drop off dramatically after a couple of kilometres from the local exchange, meaning the further away a user is, the slower their broadband service is likely to be.

With continuing upgrades to networks and advances in technology, businesses are keen to advertise new services.

The ACCC has written to industry players reminding them to take care they do not mislead customers when advertising their services.

The ACCC has called on industry to advertise speed rates that reflect what customers can reasonably expect to experience.

Likewise, customers need to be aware that both fixed line and mobile broadband speeds can vary significantly depending on a number of local factors. Because of this, it's worth asking a service provider before you sign with them what sort of speeds you may expect to receive in your area, given how far away the nearest exchange is located and the type of equipment you intend to connect with.

To help customers understand the services on offer, the ACCC has produced a fact sheet, *Broadband connection speeds*, available at no cost from our website, www.accc.gov.au.

