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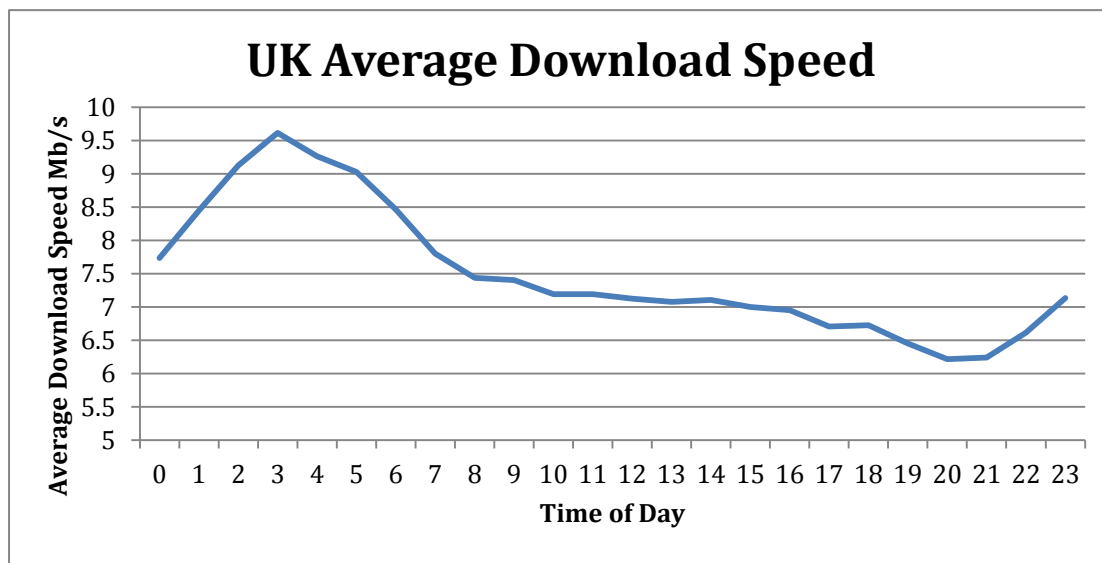
AVOID RUSH HOUR OR GET STUCK IN THE BROADBAND SLOW LANE

- **Web crawlers: download speeds in the UK drop off by an average of 35% at the times when most people want to go online^[1]**
- **Insomniac browsers: people using the internet between 2am and 3am will enjoy the UK's fastest broadband speeds^[2]**
- **Postcode lottery: Evesham^[3], Worcestershire has variations in speeds of up to 69% between peak and off-peak times^[4]**
- **Weston-Super-Mare^[5], Somerset: average download speeds fall by almost two-thirds (64%), from 9.5Mb/s to 3.4Mb/s between off-peak morning and peak evening usage times**
- **Wadebridge^[6], Cornwall: average broadband speeds slow down from only 4.1Mb/s during off-peak hours to a mere 2.1Mb/s in the evening.**

Download broadband speeds in the UK are on average 35% slower between off-peak and peak usage times^[1], according to new research by independent price comparison and switching service, uSwitch.com.

The study, based on two million speed tests across the UK^[7], reveals that only the nation's insomniacs are benefiting from the maximum headline speeds offered by providers, with the fastest average download speed of 9.6Mb/s only available between 2 and 3am. At peak surfing time between the hours of 7 to 9pm, average download speeds fall by a third to 6.2Mb/s, making the busy evening hours the slowest time of the day.

The following graph shows the variation in the UK's average download speeds throughout a typical day, illustrating just how much speeds can vary in a typical 24 hour period^[8].



Source: uSwitch.com

At a regional level, the difference in broadband speeds during peak and off-peak times is even more significant. According to the uSwitch data, internet users in the market town of Evesham^[3], Worcestershire, are seeing a massive 69% fall in broadband speeds, with average morning download speeds of 15.5Mb/s falling to just 4.9Mb/s in the evening.

Similarly, in Weston-Super-Mare^[5], Somerset, the average broadband download speed falls by almost two-thirds (64%) between off-peak morning and peak evening usage times, from 9.5Mb/s to 3.4Mb/s.

Wadebridge^[6] in Cornwall has an even worse deal - although the morning-to-evening average broadband speeds in the area vary by a slightly less significant 49%, this represents a drop-off from a limp 4.1Mb/s during off-peak hours to a snail-like 2.1Mb/s in the evening.

Ernest Doku, technology expert at uSwitch.com, says: “It really is surprising just how much broadband speeds fluctuate at different times of the day, with drop-offs of almost 70% in some areas of the UK. Not many internet users enjoy the maximum headline broadband speeds offered by providers, and certainly not during the working week.

“This research may help to shed some light on why many bewildered consumers, who believe they’ve signed up to a certain broadband speed, never actually feel like their connection is fast enough. The problem of slower broadband speeds has been exacerbated

by changes in the way people use the internet, with far more people downloading music and watching TV programmes online, inevitably putting more strain on the network.

“Although providers are working hard to upgrade the UK’s broadband infrastructure, there is a long road ahead to ensure that everyone can enjoy a much more consistent service. For those who feel they are permanently stuck in the slow lane, it’s an extremely frustrating situation, especially with many people now relying heavily on the internet in their day-to-day lives.

“It is important to remember that the fastest headline speeds are not guaranteed and home broadband users should perform an online broadband speed test to check that they are getting the best possible package for their area. If you feel the service you’re receiving is not up to scratch, you shouldn’t be afraid to shop around for a better deal.”

The following table shows the UK towns and villages with the biggest variation in broadband speeds between 7 - 9am and 7 - 9pm:

Rank	Location	Postcode	Morning speed (7-9am) (Mb/s)	Evening speed (7-9pm) (Mb/s)	% difference
1	Evesham, Worcestershire	WR11	15.5	4.9	69%
2	Weston-Super-Mare, Somerset	BS24	9.5	3.4	64%
3	Rossendale, Lancashire	BB4	11.8	4.7	60%
4	Ashton-under-Lyne, Greater Manchester	OL6	16.0	6.7	58%
5	Grimsby, North East Lincolnshire	DN34	15.1	7.1	53%
6	Telford, Shropshire	TF1	15.7	7.4	53%
7	Rotherham, South Yorkshire	S65	15.7	7.4	53%
8	Woking, Surrey	GU24	13.1	6.6	50%
9	Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire	AL7	17.3	8.7	50%
10	Wadebridge, Cornwall	PL27	4.1	2.1	49%
11	Coventry (South East), West Midlands	CV3	12.3	6.3	48%
12	Norwich (East and South East), Norfolk	NR7	11.8	6.2	48%
13	Chester, Cheshire	CH3	5.9	3.1	47%
14	Newtownards, County Down	BT23	17.4	9.2	47%
15	Eastbourne, East Sussex	BN23	4.5	2.5	45%

Source: uSwitch.com

Test your speed at <http://www.uswitch.com/broadband/speedtest/>

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Notes to editors:

1. Comparing UK's fastest average speed of 9.6Mb/s between 2am and 3am to average slowest speed of 6.2Mb/s between 7pm and 9pm
2. The UK's fastest average speed is 9.6Mb/s, recorded between 2am and 3am
3. Data from the WR11 area of Evesham
4. Comparing off-peak times of 7am to 9am to peak times of 7pm to 9pm
5. Data from the BS24 area of Weston-Super-Mare
6. Data from the PL27 area of Wadebridge
7. More than 2,000,000 speed tests were conducted through the [uSwitch.com](http://www.uswitch.com) website between March and October 2011. Only post code areas with over 100 speed tests (combined am/pm) were included in the study. Average download broadband speeds are in Mb/s. Data collected includes speeds from both ADSL and cable (fibre optic) connections
8. Graph based on 2 million speed tests conducted on www.uswitch.com/broadband/speedtest

About us

uSwitch.com is a free, impartial, online and telephone-based comparison and switching service, helping consumers compare prices on gas, electricity, water, heating cover, home telephone, broadband, digital television, mobile phones and personal finance products including mortgages, credit cards, current accounts and insurance. In 2010 uSwitch.com celebrated ten years of saving customers money.

uSwitch.com is the first comparison website to achieve the Plain English Campaign's Internet Crystal Mark, which is recognised as a standard that a website has clear language, is accessible and easy to use, and has been tested on a sample of its users.

uSwitch.com is dedicated to helping consumers save money whether they have internet access or not. It offers a dedicated call centre, manned by uSwitch customer service representatives, as well as a freepost 'Send us your bill' service, whereby customers can post their latest energy bills with their telephone number to FREEPOST USWITCH, to get a free call back from a dedicated customer services representative. The service is also available via fax, email and post. Consumers should fax 0203 214 8417, email CustomerServices@uswitch.com or write to Customer Services, uSwitch.com, Centro 3, 19 Mandela Street, London, NW1 0DU with their postcode and usage details.

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