



Slow broadband? Blame the neighbours' Wi-Fi or even your own cordless phone

Congested airwaves mean home Wi-Fi connections throttle download speeds by almost a third, according to bandwidth monitor Epiro.

The company's research showed that consumers lost an average 30% of their download speeds when using Wi-Fi at home, while latency grew by up to 20%, which could hamper online gaming, web telephony and streaming video.

"We were really surprised about the drop off given that wireless routers would normally work at 54Mbps/sec or 108Mbps/sec, which is much more than most broadband connections," Ian Wood, head of marketing for Epiro told PC Pro.

"Most people seem happy to put up with the lower performance for the convenience, but maybe they wouldn't if they knew how severe it was."

The study included monitoring the "quality of experience" in more than 14,000 homes around the world – including the UK – with 56% of the broadband labs rats on Wi-Fi and 44% using a wired ethernet connection.

According to Epiro, a prime cause of the Wi-Fi slowdown was due to interference – often from neighbours' equipment using the same frequency.

"When you get a wireless router from your ISP you set it up and if it works, all is good," said Wood. "But most routers work on the same default channel and if you live in a terrace or a flat then there's a good chance that you'll suffer interference from your neighbours, which can cause the slowdown."

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Changing the channel is the easiest fix for the problem, Wood said, while other factors that would hamper services included the router's position compared with other radio equipment in the home.

"There's a lot of competition on those frequencies," said Wood. "Cordless phones, TV remote controls and microwave ovens can all cause interference. Changing channel and repositioning the router away from other wireless devices can make a big difference."

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Please get in touch with if you need our assistance.

Tip of the Month - Windows 7 Shortcuts

Windows+Home - minimize all but the current window thus removing all the background clutter

Windows+D - minimize all windows and show the desktop

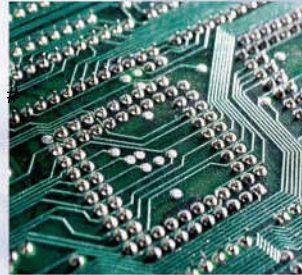
Windows+E - launch Explorer with Computer as the focus

Windows+F - launch a search box

Windows+M - minimize the current window

Windows+left/right/up - arrow snap the current window to the left/right/top of the screen

Japan crisis sends component prices soaring



Memory prices look set to surge in the aftermath of the earthquakes and tsunami that hit Japan, according to analysts.

With the world still unsure just how much damage the disaster has caused to Japan's manufacturing capability, market speculators appear to be banking on the inevitable disruption to restrict supply and push prices up.

The instability pushed spot trading prices for DDR3 1Gb 128Mx8 units up by more than 7.5% in trading today, according to DRAMeXchange, and other prices were equally volatile.

The spot price for 16GB NAND flash memory chips rose 12.5% as traders stockpiled available components and some suppliers stopped offering prices in the volatile market.

The research company said Japan makes more than one in five semiconductors used globally, and enjoys a 35% market share of NAND Flash memory. The country also supplies 13% of the world's DRAM chips.

"Based on past experience, DRAMeXchange believes that manufacturers will evaluate their fab equipment and make necessary repair," said Joan Chen, in a post on the company's blog.

"Although the semiconductor production line was not severely damaged, the material supply and basic traffic reconstruction will impact more on the supply of semiconductor than production line damage. The overall supply is expected to be affected for the next two weeks due to traffic difficulties."