

Faster Broadband

If there are 2 issues that come up regularly as far as broadband is concerned, they are Speed and Reliability. In terms of reliability there is not much you can do about the service from the ISP, it is either good or not so good, and if not then you have few options but to consider changing ISP, though this does not guarantee resolving the problem fully. I generally recommend Orange as in my humble opinion the service quality is more consistent and reliable in rural areas than any other ISP. Read about quality of service on the internet and you will find Free or Neuf is probably better rated than Orange, but out here in the rural Var the other ISPs get a worse press than Orange.

As far as the speed of your ADSL is concerned, you are limited by your location and the distance to the local exchange – up to 7 km to get 1 Meg line. However what we are interested in here is getting the most speed out of the speed that is actually available to you. Here are a few things to check:

Run a few speed tests at different times of the day, and see how your broadband is actually performing by visiting www.speedtest.net. Click on a location and watch the meters take the reading. In general early mornings should be the least busy, so you should get the fastest speeds, whereas once kids are out of school at around 16:30 you may see a considerable drop in speed as they get onto forums, chats and play online games.

Ensure all your phone sockets have micro filters, “Filtre ADSL”, plugged in. In general ADSL should work fine with 3 phone sockets in the house, if you have more sockets then a Master Filter, “Filtre ADSL Maitre”, is recommended to filter the whole house in one go on the master phone point. Filters remove “noise” and interference on the line and thus you get more speed.

If you are having problems connecting with you Modem plugged in to one socket, try it on another socket, if possible closer to master socket. You can also test your connection in the FT master socket (if you have one...) and this will give you the best connection available in the house – however you can not leave the modem plugged in there, as the socket contains a mechanism that will disconnect all the other sockets in the house – but by all means use it for testing.

Certain electrical equipment in your home may interfere with your ADSL and your wireless network. Boilers, treadmills or other devices with a motor or pump can cause electrical noise or interference which can affect the stability of your broadband. In general keep your ADSL modem and wiring away from mains power cables and electrical equipment, particularly those appliances that draw a lot of current – electric radiators, oven. As far as the WiFi is concerned be aware that Microwave ovens and cordless phones can interfere with connectivity.

Ensure you have got the latest Modem/Router that you ISP proposing- ie. Have you got the latest Livebox, Neufbox, Freebox....? For instance Orange has a new Livebox (available since late 2008) that is reported to be much more reliable than the older model that often turned itself into a “Deadbox”.

If you have been with the same supplier for years, it's likely that they now have better deals and faster services available. Many of you who have ADSL for three years or more probably started with an offer of 512 kb, or half meg, and it is more than likely that you can upgrade the speed to at least 1 meg today. Beware, however, that once you enter into a new contract you may be tied for 12 months again.

Do you have a friend who lives locally and with whom you can compare the speed and reliability? If this means changing ISP he may be able to refer a friend or be your "Parrain" whereby you could both save a few Euros.

Ensure that your computer is up to the task and not the reason behind your poor internet connection speed. If you have an older slower computer, then your internet access is likely to be slower than that of a brand new machine with all the bells and whistles. You could also check that your computer is not affected with Malware that then uses some of your internet access speed to do its nasty business in the background – regularly scan the full computer for Viruses and Spyware etc.

Finally, once you are convinced that your ADSL line is lower, regularly check the speed with the test website mentioned above, as the mind often plays tricks with you and convinces you it is slower than it really is.....

For computer problems and advice, please contact: Edward on 06 26 98 03 12 or by email on ed@emarshall.fr Previous VVV Computer articles can be found at www.emarshall.fr