

Computer Solutions

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Selecting a broadband internet service provider (ISP)

Here are some points which need to be considered in selecting a broadband internet service provider (ISP).

Consideration	What / why	Notes
Cost	Monthly charge	From £13.99 a month – may not include VAT (beware of introductory offers)
Speed	Speed of operation	Between 0.512Mbps and 8Mbps
Connection (activation) fee	A fee charged to the ISP by BT	Free OR from about £25
Modem	Interface between computer and telephone line	Free OR from about £20 (wired or wireless)
Router	Interface between a number of computers and telephone line	Free OR from about £40 (wired or wireless)
Filters	A filter is required on lines used with other devices (e.g. extension phones, faxes)	Free (two) OR from about £6 each
Download restriction (Cap)	Amount of usage allowed per month	From 1 Gb to unlimited Most ISPs have a 'fair use policy' to prevent users downloading too much content to the detriment of other users
Contention	Ratio of customers to equipment	Usually 50:1
Minimum term	Contractual agreement	Typically 12 months. Could be between 1 and 18 months
Email address	ISPs provide email addresses in a format like fred.bloggs@ispname.co.uk OR mybusinessname@ispname.co.uk.	For a more 'professional' email address like mybusinessname.co.uk you will also need a discrete domain name
Email hosting	Provision of an email service	Varying number of email addresses and amount of space available Some ISPs block emails being sent from a third party domain
Web site hosting	Provision of storage of web site information	Varying amount of space available
Security (virus, anti-spam, firewall)		May be included (some ISPs do not allow users to opt out) OR at additional cost
Support	Help line	Internet: Free from most ISPs Telephone: Free OR from about 50p per minute. May be limited to 'office' hours
Business use	Contractual agreement	Some ISPs do not allow business use. Some ISPs limit liability when used for business
Music and entertainment	Viewing television, downloading music, listening to radio and playing games over the Internet	Provided by some ISPs at additional cost
Telephone	Broadband internet service and telephone bundle provided by some ISPs	Could require a change of telephone number Some ISPs provide this service by 'Voice Over Internet Protocol' (VOIP) not a fixed line telephone
Email and web site address (personalised)	For a personal / professional email and web site address like mybusinessname.co.uk you would also need a domain name	Domain name registration from about £7.50 per year Email and web site hosting from about £120 per year

Web sites which may be used to select an appropriate broadband internet service provider include –

www.broadbandchoices.co.uk

www.uswitch.com

If you have any further queries on this subject please contact me.

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Helping to make computers efficient and effective