

MoneyHighStreet.com

Mobile Broadband Comparison Review

T Mobile Web 'n' Walk
Vodafone
3 Mobile Broadband

Summary	3
T Mobile Web 'n' Walk.....	4
T Mobile Contracts	4
Out of bundle charges	4
Installing the software and modem	4
Using the USB Manager software.....	5
Internet download speeds.....	5
Connectivity whilst mobile.....	5
Connectivity in rural areas.....	6
3 Mobile Broadband.....	7
3 Mobile Contracts.....	7
Out of bundle charges	7
Installing the software and modem	7
Using the management software	8
Internet download speeds.....	8
Connectivity whilst mobile.....	8
Connectivity in rural areas.....	9
Vodafone.....	10
Vodafone Contracts.....	10
Out of bundle charges	10
Installing the software and modem	11
Internet download speeds.....	11
Connectivity whilst mobile.....	11
Connectivity in rural areas.....	12
Conclusion	13
Out of bundle charges	13
Useful Resources	14
T Mobile broadband resources	14
3 Mobile broadband resources.....	14
Vodafone mobile broadband resources.....	14
About MoneyHighStreet.com.....	15
MoneyHighStreet.com Contact Details:.....	15

Summary

With a growing number of mobile broadband providers, with ever more complex contracts and pay as you go solutions, it is becoming difficult to select the right product.

MoneyHighStreet.com has conducted in depth testing of mobile broadband products from Vodafone, T Mobile and 3 Mobile.

Our views on mobile broadband download speed and connection stability, ease of use, and the cost effectiveness of the various contracts and pay as you go plans for each provider are published in this white paper.

T Mobile Web 'n' Walk

The [T Mobile Web 'n' Walk](#) service is a pay as you go service that costs £4 for every day that it is used. There are no monthly fees and contracts, although there is a 3GB per month fair usage allowance.

T Mobile Contracts

T Mobile also offers monthly contracts in addition to the pay as you go service.

Product	GB	Contract	Cost
Web 'n' Walk Plus	3GB	24 mths	£15
Web 'n' Walk Plus	3GB	12 mths	£29
Web 'n' Walk Max	10GB	24 mths	£35
Web 'n' Walk Plus	10GB	12 mths	£44

Click [here](#) for more details about the T Mobile monthly contract plans and [here](#) for details about their pay as you go plan.

Out of bundle charges

There are no out of bundle charges, however T Mobile reserve the right to restrict your bandwidth and download speeds if you exceed your 3 GB monthly allowance.

Installing the software and modem

The T Mobile web service uses the same USB modem as the older Vodafone modem. The package comes with an installation CD that quickly installs the Web 'n' Walk USB Manager software onto your PC.

On our Windows XP Pro laptop, the software installed flawlessly and we were soon up connected to the Internet using their service.



T Mobile USB modem



T Mobile Modem Stick

Using the USB Manager software

We like the T Mobile Web 'n' Walk USB manager software. There is a graph that plots current download speeds (see below) and enables you to send texts via the modem.

You can monitor your download speeds in real time and also view the bandwidth that you have used.

There is also an indicator showing the type of connection i.e. 3G or GPRS. This is a useful feature and is a common feature with all the mobile broadband systems that we tested.

Internet download speeds

Once a 3G connection to the Internet had been established, the performance of T Mobile broadband seemed snappy. We consistently achieved speeds close to the 2Mb maximum and we never experienced drop outs whilst stationary.

We feel that the T Mobile Web 'n' walk service is perfectly usable for most mobile business applications, although you do have to be aware of the monthly 3GB fair use restrictions.

The 3Gb usage applies to both data uploaded and data downloaded, so this is something to be aware of.

Connectivity whilst mobile

We tested the T Mobile web 'n' walk system whilst travelling at normal speeds in the car.

In general, connection stability was good in strong signal areas, however when driving into a marginal strength area, we lost the connection on two separate occasions.

As the connection was not automatically remade when passing into a stronger signal area, we consider this to be a downside of the T Mobile performance.

This could prove frustrating when working on a train, for example, and places the T Mobile web 'n' walk at the bottom of our connection stability testing.

Connectivity in rural areas

Connectivity to the Internet is reliant on the strength of mobile signals and so can suffer in many rural areas.

We found that the T mobile modem did drop down to GPRS speeds in some rural areas, however it faired as well as the 3 Mobile device, and worse than the Vodafone modem, in poor reception areas.

3 Mobile Broadband

[3 Mobile broadband](#) offers a wide range of pay as you go and monthly subscription plans. Monthly plans cost from £10 per month and pay as you go plans also start at £10 per 30 days, but have no contract commitments.

3 Mobile Contracts

Product	GB	Contract	Modem Type	Modem Cost	Cost
Broadband Lite	1GB	12 mths	Choice	£49.99	£10
Broadband Plus	3 GB	12 mths	Choice	Free	£15
Broadband Max	7 GB	12 mths	Choice	Free	£25
Broadband Lite	1GB	18 or 24 mths	Choice	Free	£10
Broadband Plus	3 GB	18 or 24 mths	Choice	Free	£15
Broadband Max	7 GB	18 or 24 mths	Choice	Free	£25
Broadband Lite	1GB	30 days	Choice	£49.99	£10
Broadband Plus	3 GB	30 days	Choice	£49.99	£15
Broadband Max	7 GB	30 days	Choice	£49.99	£25

Click [here](#) for more details about 3 Mobile monthly contracts and [here](#) for details about 3 Mobile pay as you go plans.

Out of bundle charges

One point to be aware of with 3 Mobile contracts is the out of bundle charges.

For monthly price bands these charges are 10p per MB (£100 per GB)

For pay as you go plans the out of bundle charges are £1 per MB (£1000 per GB!!!)

As 3 Mobile charges by the MB then you will only pay out of bundle charges for the extra bandwidth that you have used in MB rather than in 1GB increments, as charged by Vodafone.

We consider these out of bundle charges to be highly excessive, so you should be very careful about your usage of your 3 Mobile broadband. 3 Mobile will, however, put a temporary stop on your service if you exceed £50 so this will be the maximum that you will have to pay.

Installing the software and modem

The 3 Mobile black modem has a stylish design and once connected to your PC auto installs the drivers and management software.

Once the software is installed you can then connect to the Internet, so the whole process is fast and simple and there were no compatibility problems with our Fujitsu Windows XP Pro laptop.



3 Mobile USB Stick



3 Mobile Black Modem



3 Mobile USB modem

Using the management software

The 3 Mobile management interface is very simple and intuitive to use. Click the button to connect to the Internet. Click it again to disconnect and other than sending texts, and getting usage reports, that is it.

This is in common with all the products that we tested, however we like the fact that the 3 and Vodafone software auto installs as this makes it very easy to move the modem from PC to PC.

Internet download speeds

3G connections to the Internet seemed fast and we obtained speeds at around 2Mb in good reception areas. These speeds are comparable to the T Mobile speeds and there is little to choose between download performances when there is good 3G reception.

Different subscription and pay as you go plans determine the allowable monthly download limits but at £25 for 7 GB of monthly bandwidth, there should be cost effective plans even for heavy Internet users.

Connectivity whilst mobile

Travelling at motorway speeds in a car provides a generally good experience with 3 Internet connectivity. We didn't experience the disconnection problems that occurred

when using the T Mobile system, and the signal seamlessly dropped down to GPRS speeds and back again when moving into, and out of, poor reception areas.

In general, we felt that the 3 Mobile connectivity was more stable than with T Mobile and matched the stability of Vodafone when travelling.

Connectivity in rural areas

When tested in poor reception areas in the countryside, we found that 3 Mobile broadband was not as effective as Vodafone. Whereas we were unable to establish a connection to the 3 Mobile network in a very rural part of Norfolk, we were able to connect to the Internet at GPRS speeds with Vodafone.

The T Mobile modem also experienced connectivity problems in this part of the countryside, so we feel that the 3 and T Mobile solutions are not as effective as Vodafone in rural areas with poor reception.

There is a useful 3 Mobile coverage map [here](#).

Vodafone

Vodafone offer monthly [mobile broadband](#) subscriptions from £15 per month for 3Gb of data transfer, to £25 per month for 5Gb of downloads. These prices include VAT but there are various contract lengths to be aware of.

Vodafone can offer speeds of up to 7.2 MBs via its UK based HSDPA network, however this is currently limited to major cities such as in central London and around large airports such as Gatwick and Heathrow.

The 7.2Mbps speeds are also available only when using the USB modem stick (see below) which has a minimum contract length of 18 months.

Vodafone Contracts

Vodafone offer a complex range of contracts depending on modem, contract length and monthly download:

Product	Contract	Type	Modem Cost	Roaming	Cost
Mobile Broadband 3GB	24 mths	USB Stick	£39	Yes	£15
Mobile Broadband 3GB	18 mths	USB Stick	£79	Yes	£15
Mobile Broadband 3GB	12 mths	USB Stick	Not available		
Mobile Broadband 3GB	24 mths	USB	Free	Yes	£25
Mobile Broadband 3GB	18 mths	USB	£59	Yes	£15
Mobile Broadband 3GB	12 mths	USB	£99	Yes	£15
Mobile Broadband 5GB	24 mths	USB Stick	Free	Yes	£25
Mobile Broadband 5GB	18 mths	USB Stick	£39	Yes	£25
Mobile Broadband 5GB	12 mths	USB Stick	Not available		
Mobile Broadband 5GB	24 mths	USB	Free	Yes	£25
Mobile Broadband 5GB	18 mths	USB	£19	Yes	£25
Mobile Broadband 5GB	12 mths	USB	£59	Yes	£25
Mobile Broadband 30 Day	30 days	USB	£99	No	£20

Click [here](#) for more details about Vodafone price plans.

Out of bundle charges

Vodafone charge a reasonable out of bundle charge of £15 per GB, which is far lower than the £100 per GB charged by 3 Mobile for their monthly plans.

Installing the software and modem

As shown in the contracts table, above, Vodafone supplies two types of USB modem – as standard USB modem exactly the same as used by T Mobile and a USB stick modem.

If you want access to the 7.2 MBs HSDPA network, you must use the memory stick modem, and therefore ensure that you subscribe to the correct plan.

As with T Mobile and 3, the Vodafone management software auto installs the first time the modem is plugged into your computer. This makes transferring the Vodafone mobile internet connectivity to different computers very easy and straightforward.

There is very little to difference between the management software of Vodafone, 3 and T Mobile Internet connectivity as all are perfectly functional and easy to use.



Vodafone USB modem stick



Vodafone USB modem

Internet download speeds

Vodafone download speeds subjectively feel slower when tested against both 3 and T Mobile in the same geographic area, however we were achieving download speeds of 1.8 Mbs in an area with good 3G reception.

Although Vodafone state that maximum download speeds of 3.6 MBs are possible with the USB modem, we have not achieved these in any area tested. We have also not tested the 7.2 MBs capabilities using the USB modem stick modem.

So on subjective testing; it would appear that Vodafone performs poorly in comparison to the other products; however its performance is more than adequate for every situation that we have encountered.

Most importantly, the stability and coverage of the Vodafone Internet connectivity out performed both the 3 and T Mobile as discussed below.

Connectivity whilst mobile

Stability of connection whilst travelling at speed is a major strength of the Vodafone broadband product tested. We have used Vodafone mobile broadband in cars on motorways and on trains and have found connectivity whilst moving to be excellent.

When travelling through long tunnels on the train, the connection will inevitably drop, but will be seamlessly established again when the train emerges from the tunnel. When travelling from a 3G reception area into a GPRS zone, the Vodafone connection will be retained, but will seamlessly drop down to GPRS speeds.

For business users who travel frequently, the stability of Vodafone mobile broadband will be a major advantage, and should possibly be a deciding factor in product selection.

Connectivity in rural areas

During connectivity tests in deepest rural Norfolk, we found Vodafone could establish an internet connection, albeit at GPRS speeds, when both T Mobile and 3 failed to find a signal.

If the Vodafone modem failed to establish a connection in a rural area, then 3 and T Mobile products were also unable to connect to networks too.

In our tests, we found Vodafone provided the best connectivity in poor signal reception areas, and is the product of choice if mobile broadband is required in a wide range of places.

Click [here](#) for more information about Vodafone coverage.

Conclusion

All three products tested provide excellent mobile broadband connectivity and at prices that make mobile access to the Internet a feasible and cost effective solution.

Selecting a particular product will come down to the type of contract that you are willing to under take and to your usage of mobile broadband.

If travelling to places with poor reception, or frequently travel on trains, then, in our opinion, the Vodafone products provide the best solution as our tests showed that Vodafone could connect in places that 3 and T Mobile could not.

If you are travelling abroad frequently, Vodafone has an [extensive network of partner companies in a wide range of countries](#), although you pay extra for connectivity whilst abroad and must have a roaming enabled contract.

If your use of mobile broadband is limited to areas of good 3G reception, then you may find the Vodafone contract commitments much more restrictive than both T Mobile and 3 Mobile.

As all three products are excellent in strong 3G reception areas, we would favour the 3 Mobile solution for both its download speed and stability whilst travelling.

The 3 Mobile pay as you go service also seems reasonably priced at £10 per month and therefore represents excellent value for money to receive the benefits of mobile broadband.

T Mobile provides a unique daily pay as you go service that is highly cost effective for very infrequent users of mobile broadband, however we feel that the 3 Mobile pay as you go service costing £10 per month represents better value for these users.

Out of bundle charges

We do have one major caveat about recommending 3 Mobile broadband, however. Whilst we feel that their monthly contract charges are reasonable, and the quality of service is good, you must be aware of their highly excessive out of bundle charges.

With out of bundle charges costing £100 per GB for monthly subscribers and a staggering £1000 per GB for pay as you go users, you must take great care to stay within your bundle limits, if you select the otherwise excellent 3 Mobile product. 3 Mobile will, however, put a temporary stop on your service if you exceed £50 out of bundle charges as a contract customer.

Vodafone charge by the GB for out of bundle usage so a small transgression over your monthly limit will trigger the full £15 charge.

Useful Resources

Click on the following links to find useful information about the various products and services discussed in this white paper.

T Mobile broadband resources

[Mobile broadband home page](#)

[T Mobile monthly contract plans](#)

[T Mobile pay per day information](#)

3 Mobile broadband resources

[Mobile broadband website](#)

[Mobile broadband coverage map](#)

[Data usage calculator](#)

[3 Mobile monthly contract plans](#)

[3 Mobile Pay as you go](#)

[3 Mobile frequently asked questions](#)

Vodafone mobile broadband resources

[Vodafone mobile broadband home page](#)

[Mobile broad coverage details](#)

[Vodafone mobile broadband contract plans](#)

[Vodafone mobile broadband abroad](#)

About MoneyHighStreet.com

MoneyHighStreet.com provides personal finance news, reviews and information for UK based consumers.

Covering subjects such as loans, insurance, investments and utilities, MoneyHighStreet.com publishes reviews to help consumers make informed choices about products and services.

MoneyHighStreet.com Contact Details:

MoneyHighStreet.com
Tudor House
Church Road
Terling
Essex CM3 2PQ
United Kingdom

Tel: +44 1245 233234

To contact us via email please use the form on this page:

http://www.moneyhighstreet.com/contact_form.php

<http://www.moneyhighstreet.com>