The 2017 Mobile Network Test in the UK

Vodafone were Best in Test for Voice in London, Belfast, Birmingham and Bristol

Here's why:

On their tour through the UK, P3's four test cars visited 20 of the largest UK cities and many smaller towns as well as covering the connecting roads. Additionally, two walktest teams conducted tests in selected cities and towns. For the voice rating, each car and walktest team member carried Samsung Galaxy S7 smartphones that permanently called each other. The connected testing equipment registered success ratios, setup times and speech quality. In order to simulate normal smartphone usage, data transfers took place in the background of the test calls.

Vodafone were Best in Test for Network in Glasgow and Liverpool

Here's why:

The volume of mobile data downloads and uploads is growing exponentially. While 4G/LTE currently is the best technology to cope with these increasing demands and all UK 4G networks realise a wide coverage of the population, the four operators pursue different rollout strategies. P3's testing takes both aspects into account – the benchmarking of web-page downloads as well as file downloads and uploads rewards fast throughputs. At the same time, it assesses the networks' availability and stability by examining success ratios. In order to assess typical performance as well as peak speeds, P3 determined the minimum data rates that are available in 90 per cent of the cases plus the peak data rates that would be surpassed in 10 per cent of the cases. P3's approach for YouTube testing recognises that this popular video service uses adaptive bit rates. This method strives for a better user experience, subordinating pixel resolution to stable playback. As a consequence, besides success ratios, start times and the absence of interruptions, P3 have added the average video resolution as another important performance indicator. For data, Vodafone scored 55.2 out of 60 in Glasgow and 55.1 out of 60 in Liverpool.

Vodafone is the most reliable network based on crowdsourcing.

Here's why:

An additional important aspect of mobile service quality – above performance and measured values – is the actual availability of the mobile networks to the customers. Obviously, even the best performing network is only of limited benefit to its users, if it is frequently impaired by outages or disruptions. Therefore, P3 has been looking into additional methods for the quantitative determination of network availability, collecting data via crowdsourcing. This method must however not be confused with the drivetests and walktests described above. P3 are convinced that crowdsourcing can significantly enhance the aspects of benchmarking: Drivetesting and walktesting has obvious advantages as a very controlled environment, while crowdsourcing accelerates when looking for longer time periods or geography beyond defined test routes. So, when it comes to diagnosing the sheer availability of the respective mobile networks, a crowdsourcing approach can provide additional insights. Therefore, P3 has developed an app based crowdsourcing mechanism in order to assess how a large number of mobile customers experience the availability of their mobile network. Vodafone achieved the maximum amount of crowd score points (30).