

Is ADSL a rip-off or not?

A new trend is emerging in the ADSL arena, every second Internet Service Provider (ISP) is claiming to offer the fastest, most affordable ADSL. Some of these dubious ISPs even promise clients unshaped ADSL for a couple of hundred rand.



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OpenWeb CEO Keoma Wright has warned unsuspecting consumers to read the fine print before signing any ADSL contract. "Be careful, the catch is in the fine print. What many ISPs advertise as Unshaped, more than likely comes with a complicated, draconian style Fair Usage Policy hidden deep within the realms of their Terms of Service."

Unshaped Internet allows for the full speed download of torrents and p2p all day every day. In technical terms, unshape means that no specific port or protocol is prioritised and all traffic receives an equal priority.

He says it is easy for an ISP to promise Unshaped ADSL. "Most of these ISPs would allow you for example 2GBs of unshaped on your uncapped account, after which they throttle you into oblivion. This is certainly not good business practise and causes huge headaches for the honest ISPs, those that offer clients what they promise."

"To make matters worse, the real cost of a 1Mbps uncapped unshaped uncontended ADSL service, presuming you are on 1:1 contention, would be around R13500 per month," he explains.

The bulk of this cost is the Telkom IP Connect (IPC) portion. Telkom IPC allows ISPs access to the Telkom ADSL network, enabling them to sell products on their own networks. As is clearly demonstrated, it is not possible to offer an unshaped service for a couple of hundred Rand without some serious terms attached to it.

Unshaped becomes affordable to consumers when it is offered in the form of a 'Capped' ADSL package. Capped ADSL packages have a usage limit and it is therefore possible to sell off superb unshaped packages at an affordable rate, as network usage can be controlled.

"I would advise consumers to always read the fine print, no matter how boring they may find it. ISPs are obliged to advertise their Fair Usage Policy before a consumer signs up and if a consumer does not understand the Fair Usage

Policy, they should ask the ISP to explain it to them. Consumers have the right to understand every aspect of the product they are spending their hard earned money on," he concludes.

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