

New DE-CIX survey:

More than a third of Germans struggle with Internet problems almost daily

*38 percent struggle with Internet delays anywhere from several times a week to daily //
Despite this, from the user's perspective, rural Internet coverage is better than its reputation
// 41 percent of consumers see network congestion and 32 percent poor Internet
infrastructure as the cause*

Frankfurt am Main, June 15, 2022 – 38 percent of German consumers struggle with noticeable delays in Internet use several times a week or even on a daily basis. This is one of the findings of a representative online survey* recently conducted by DE-CIX, operator of one of the world's largest Internet Exchanges in Frankfurt, Germany. Young adults and people working from home are particularly aware of such delays. But according to the survey results, more than one-third of over-55-year-olds are also frequently affected by sluggish Internet connections (34 percent). Surprisingly, the population in urban areas (cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants) reported limitations in Internet speed more often than respondents in rural areas (small cities and towns with fewer than 20,000 inhabitants). Users usually look outside their own households for responsibility for delays.

Frustrating user experience still the order of the day

During the Covid-19 pandemic, large portions of daily life shifted onto the Internet, and today, more than two years later, many of these digital habits remain. The gapless provision of fast, low-latency and stable Internet to the German population is apparently making little headway. Even in 2022, almost anyone can tell similar stories from their everyday online life: of sluggish video conference transmission when working from home, of the online yoga instructor's voice breaking due to the jitter on the Internet connection, of goals going unseen while livestreaming the soccer match of the week. Delays in Internet use rob Germans of their time and try their patience.

For 38 percent of German users, such delays are part of online norm, occurring several times a week up to even daily. In a comparable survey last year, 33.5 percent of respondents had reported problems. In contrast, only eight percent of this year's respondents say they never experience such inconveniences. In this regard, the younger age groups of 18-24-year-olds (45 percent) and 25-34-year-olds (39 percent) are more sensitive to the delays than the older respondents. But even in the over-55 age group, more than a third (34 percent) report speed problems when using the Internet.

This year, respondents observe that they are most likely to experience delays with video or music streaming, such as with Netflix, Spotify, or YouTube (35 percent), followed by speed issues related to working from home, such as video conferencing, webinars, or the use of cloud applications (21 percent). But the user experience for transactions such as online banking and online shopping is also



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affected by delays caused by a poor Internet connection, anywhere from several times a week to every day (18 percent). In addition, Internet disruptions are also noticeable for 17 percent of respondents during their leisure time, when livestreaming sporting events or concerts.

Is rural Internet better than its reputation?

Internet coverage in rural areas generally does not have a good reputation. Therefore, this year DE-CIX also looked at the residential environment of the respondents. From the user's point of view, Internet coverage in rural areas was even slightly better than in big cities: While 38 percent of the population of smaller German cities, towns, and rural regions (<20,000 inhabitants) say they experience delays in Internet use anywhere from several times a week to every day, 41 percent of people living in large cities (>100,000 inhabitants) complain of such limitations. This compares with 35 percent of residents of medium-sized cities (20,000 to 100,000 inhabitants), who are comparatively unaffected.

“The fact that the qualitative perception of the existing Internet connection among the population in the countryside, in medium-sized cities, and in large cities shows little difference is something that surprised us,” says Harald A. Summa, CEO of DE-CIX. “Is it because the Internet really is worse in the large German cities, or are those who live there simply more demanding? One thing is certain: following the German government's recent cabinet decision on the right to 'fast' Internet, there is a concrete need for action on the part of all digital infrastructure providers nationwide with regard to latency. The target is a maximum of 150 milliseconds – and we are a long way from achieving this, not just in remote areas, due to the slow rollout of fiber-optic networks, for example. This was impressively demonstrated in our study.”

Like last year, there is widespread agreement among respondents that the possible causes of poor Internet performance are primarily beyond their own control: Forty-one percent cite network congestion as the reason for the delays they experience, 32 percent cite poor local network roll-out, and 19 percent say their Internet provider does not offer enough bandwidth. 12 percent suspect the reason for the problems to be that the servers operated by content providers such as Netflix are slow. Only 10 percent of respondents blame their own outdated devices, such as laptops or smartphones, for poor Internet performance.

Roll-out and optimization of digital infrastructure and Internet ecosystem in Germany becoming obligatory

Harald A. Summa, CEO of DE-CIX, sees two starting points for quickly reducing frustrating user experiences and eliminating them altogether in the future: “We still urgently need to drive forward the roll-out of digital infrastructure in Germany. There is no other way to solve connectivity problems for remote working or for streaming in the evenings. Not only does network roll-out play a role here, but so too does the building of more data centers and Internet Exchanges close to users. Here, for example, we have announced a significant step for eastern and central Germany with the new DE-CIX Leipzig. The further away from the user content and services are hosted, the greater the latency, i.e., the delay in data exchange between the networks involved – and the more jitter there will be in live



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streaming in HD/4K. Especially for future technologies such as autonomous driving and remote-controlled operations, low latencies even become critical.”

** The data used is based on an online survey conducted by YouGov Deutschland GmbH, in which 2100 people participated between May 25 and 27, 2022. The results were weighted and are representative for the German population (age 18+).*

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About DE-CIX

DE-CIX (German Commercial Internet Exchange) is the world's leading operator of Internet Exchanges (IXs). At its close to 40 locations in Europe, Africa, North America, the Middle East, India, and Asia, DE-CIX interconnects thousands of network operators (carriers), Internet service providers (ISPs), content providers and enterprise networks from more than 100 countries, and offers peering, cloud, and interconnection services. DE-CIX in Frankfurt, Germany, is one of the largest Internet Exchanges in the world, with a data volume of close to 30 Exabytes per year (as of 2021) and close to 1100 connected networks. More than 200 colleagues from over 30 different nations form the foundation of the DE-CIX success story in Germany and around the world. Since the beginning of the commercial Internet, DE-CIX has had a decisive influence – in a range of leading global bodies, such as the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF) – on co-defining guiding principles for the Internet of the present and the future. As the operator of critical IT infrastructure, DE-CIX bears a great responsibility for the seamless, fast, and secure data exchange between people, enterprises, and organizations at its locations around the globe.

Further information at www.de-cix.net

Media Contact DE-CIX:

Judith Ellis, Alexander Thieme, Carsten Titt – Global Public Relations – Telephone: +49 (0)69 1730902 130 – Email: media@de-cix.net