Small U.K. ISPs deliver more satisfaction

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Customer-satisfaction levels are significantly higher among the United Kingdom's smaller Internet service providers when compared to their larger rivals.

Eight of 23 ISPs rated by Which Magazine's survey of 10,000 U.K.broadband users achieved customer-service ratings of 70 percent or more -- and none of them is considered a large player in the U.K.market, ZDNet reported.

Harrow-based Metronet received the highest rating -- 91 percent -- followed by Freedom 2 Surf, Zen Internet, Nildram, Waitrose, Eclipse, PlusNet and Force 9, all of which received Which's "Best Buy" award.

None of the largest U.K.providers -- Wanadoo, Tiscali, AOL, BT and NTL -- achieved a satisfaction level above 40 percent.

"One possibility is that the smaller providers may attract the type of user who understands some of the technical issues, and thus support can be simpler for day-to-day faults, where as with the larger providers you are dealing with a massed public service, and the support staff will be more script based," said Andrew Ferguson of ADSLGuide."One other problem for the larger ISPs is the lack of people with a good technical understanding of ADSL, and the ability to help customers too.The technical staff will often be in second or third line support, and staff retention can be a big issue, as many will find more challenging and often better paid jobs elsewhere."

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