

Poor Wifi and 4G in UK stores means retailers miss sales opportunities

By [Barbara Santamaria](#) - 25 January 2017

New research from leading independent network benchmarking firm Global Wireless Solutions has revealed that shopping centres and department stores are lagging on mobile service, with signals dropping on average 20-30 decibels inside stores compared to outside.



Lancôme

This is one of the biggest frustrations for shoppers, who now rely on their smartphones and expect a reliable connection when shopping in stores.

GWS looked at the voice and data tasks on mobiles at over 100 stores in 10 cities, finding that one of the starkest differences was found inside Oxford Street retailers.

Outside the stores on Oxford Street, average performance across all networks was 100% failure free, however when inside John Lewis and Selfridges, mobile performance slumped, leading to many dropped calls, mobile internet connection failures and slower internet connections speeds.

The best results were recorded at Debenhams, where shopper's mobile service was 33% more reliable than John Lewis.

Trafford Centre in Salford and Metrocentre in Gateshead are the best UK shopping centres for mobile signal, while St David's centre in Cardiff is the worst, said GWS.

Having a good mobile signal is important as mobile devices are now more closely involved with the shopping process than ever before. 38% of shoppers said in a survey they like to use their smartphones in retail stores to compare prices online, while 30% of respondents said their most popular mobile activity in stores is checking social networks.

Meanwhile 23% of shoppers like to message friends for advice on a purchase, and 21% of shoppers now use their mobile devices in changing rooms.

"Our recent nationwide test of shopping hotspots showed many shoppers are getting poor service at peak shopping times of the year. Mobile devices are now so integral to the shopping experience, whether calling loved ones to ask about a present for a sibling, sending pictures of items to friends on WhatsApp or just taking a break between shops in the communal areas. However, our tests show operators, retailers and shopping centre owners can clearly do more to deliver a more consistent service across the country," commented GWS CEO Paul Carter.

"Retail sales around the Christmas season account for a large part of yearly sales and now Valentine's Day, another large shopping period, is fast approaching; [retailers] need to be doing everything they can to encourage shopper footfall."

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