Business-wide communication problems? Packet loss may be the issue

Business owners are being urged to pay attention to signs of packet loss and seek ways to fix essential communication networks.

Packet loss is a symptom of a network failure, when packets of data are unable to reach their destination because they are interrupted. The issue can cause performance issues across all types of digital communication, which is why it is so detrimental to businesses.

Online cloud experts from TelephoneSystems.Cloud have shared signs businesses may be affected by packet loss and what they can do to fix the issues.

Every internet activity requires the transfer of 'packets', so any business experiencing packet-related issues is sure to see consequences in day-to-day actions, whether this be communicating with employees and colleagues or with customers.

Packet loss can be caused by a number of different factors, including security breaches, hardware failure and network congestion.

When browsing the internet, businesses might not notice they are suffering with packet loss, as the browser just resends missing packets, but when in a live situation, such as video meetings or phone calls packet loss becomes more apparent, as it can't resend the missing packets without jumbling up the live communication.

The telephone systems experts advise business owners suffering from packet loss to take a few easy steps to get communications back on track.

Juliet Moran from TelephoneSystems.Cloud says: "It is crucial for business owners to have a sound understanding of how their network works and how to fix any issues that may arise. Failure to do so could result in valuable time lost and can create frustration for staff and customers.

"Packet loss is something that can affect all businesses and it's an industry-wide problem for those of us in the communications industry.

"Often, people will experience packet loss and it will disrupt their phone and video usage, but instead of fixing the cause of the packet loss within the building, they call their VoIP phone provider presuming it's the provider at fault.

Once you experience packet loss, this will affect all services, regardless of the provider, so it's important for business owners to get on top of their network issues and ensure the network is running smoothly. "

Here are TelephoneSystems.Cloud's tips for troubleshooting and fixing packet loss

1. **Detecting Packet Loss**
   The first thing to do is run a command prompt from your PC and type the following words

   ```
   Ping 8.8.8.8 -t
   ```

   This will show you packets travelling on your network.

   ```
   Reply form 8.8.8.8: bytes=32 time=8ms TTL=118
   ```

If you experience time out's instead of replies

```
Request timed out
```

Or large numbers randomly happening in the time section e.g. `time=128ms`
Either are a sign you are experiencing packet loss.

2. **Hardware & Software**
   Old hardware and software can cause packet loss on a network. Making sure key networking equipment such as routers and switches are running the latest firmware can make a significant improvement.

3. **Has something changed?**
   In most situations something will have changed on the network and knowing what has changed can help pinpoint the hardware causing the issue. Such things as an IP conflict caused by having two bits of hardware on the same IP will create packet loss.

4. **Bandwidth usage**
   Running out of bandwidth can cause packet loss. Having viruses on your network are often the cause of running out of bandwidth, so make sure everything is scanned and up to date. If you are in a location with poor wired internet connectivity, consider using a different style of connection, such as 4G or Satellite.

5. **Running over Wi-Fi?**
   If you have too many items using Wi-Fi, this can overload your Wi-Fi network, causing packet loss. Businesses should always favour a wired connection where possible, as this eliminates interference on Wi-Fi. If you have to use Wi-Fi, ensure you only add hardware you need and don't run everything over Wi-Fi.

6. **Regular network monitoring**
   Use network monitoring tools to tracker performance and identify any anomalies or bottlenecks that could lead to packet loss. There are online tools you can use to detect and diagnose packet loss and network interference.

7. **Wired connection issues**
   Wired networks are less likely to experience loss of data packers in transmission, so they tend to be more stable. But, faulty wires can affect data packets, so make sure to use wired cables that are not deteriorating at all. This is sometimes obvious if only one device is having issues, not everyone on the network.

8. **Contact your internet provider**
   If your packet loss is occurring outside of the business's internal network, contact your internet service provider for assistance, as there might be an issue with the wiring in the cabinet, or to your building. Your provider will be able to troubleshoot this with you.

IT companies are very good at troubleshooting packet loss, so if you are unable to find the problem, it's always worth getting in the specialists to solve any packet loss issues.

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