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MOBILE COMMUNICATIONS QUALITY OF SERVICE: AN INDEPENDENT BENCHMARK

Overview

The Malta Communications Authority (MCA) concluded its independent benchmark on the Quality of Service (QoS) of mobile communications. The benchmark assessed the quality of voice and data services offered by mobile service providers in and across Malta and Gozo against internationally recognised standards.

Mobile Communications: An Evolving Landscape

In recent years, mobile communications have undergone significant transformation. Once viewed primarily as an extension of fixed voice services, mobile networks now support a wide array of data-intensive applications. These include real-time communications, social media, video streaming, and cloud-based services, all of which rely on a high quality of service to deliver optimal user experiences, especially when on the go.

In this context, an independent QoS benchmark of mobile services becomes increasingly important to evaluate and ensure service performance from a user perspective.

The Benchmarking Exercise

Following a public tender in 2024, the MCA commissioned **Systemics-PAB** to carry out the mobile QoS benchmarking exercise. This assessment served two primary objectives:

1. To provide users with a snapshot of mobile network performance at a given point in time.
2. To support the MCA in evaluating whether regulatory measures relating to network performance may be warranted in the future.

The measurements were conducted in December 2024. Importantly, operators were not informed of the specific testing period to ensure objective results.

The benchmarking covered both **voice** and **data** services. Voice tests included standard voice calls and WhatsApp voice calls. Data tests focused on browsing speed, data throughput, latency, video streaming, and eGaming performance.

Benchmarking Results: Performance Highlights

Epic emerged as the top overall performer in this benchmarking exercise, with Melita and GO taking second and third place, respectively.

- **Voice services:** Epic led in voice call experience, followed by Melita.
- **Data throughput:** Epic again led in data throughput, closely followed by GO.
- **Browsing, Streaming and eGaming:** GO took the spotlight in this category and ranked first in browsing performance, video streaming quality, and eGaming, performance followed by Epic.
- **Geographical Consistency:** Epic stood out for its uniform performance across Malta and Gozo, demonstrating minimal variation, and ensuring a stable user experience regardless of location.

Concluding Remarks

The benchmarking results offer important insight into the performance of Malta's mobile network operators, empowering consumers with transparent and data-driven comparisons. Beyond informing public choice, these evaluations act as a driver for continual service enhancement across the sector.

Looking ahead, the Malta Communications Authority will conduct the next mobile Quality of Service benchmarking exercise in Q4 2025, reaffirming its commitment to monitoring progress and supporting the ongoing improvement of mobile services throughout Malta.