

Hacienda Riquelme Golf Resort
Communications report 17.09.12

This report is based on a meeting held on the 3rd September with Aziz and Maria Jose of A2Z

Internet

Infrastructure

For those that are not aware, the infrastructure is fully owned by A2Z. That infrastructure includes the microwave link to La Torre and all the fibre optic connections to each apartment. This means that unless A2Z agree otherwise, they are the only suppliers that we are able to use. Given such a monopoly position, why would A2Z ever consider allowing a competitor to use their infrastructure.

There is no direct fibre optic link between HR and the outside world. All our internet connectivity is via the microwave link to La Torre and then out to the WWW via an 80 mg fibre.

Although there is only one antenna the functionality inside it is fully duplicated which limits the potential for service outages due to having single points of failure.

The routers that A2Z use are all Cisco and A2Z and Cisco have recently discovered that they have not been correctly configured. This has now been corrected.

The major issue which this incorrect configuration allowed was that although every apartment is provided with a 2 mg service, the mis-configuration allowed that every device within an apartment was provided with 2 mg. Thus an apartment with 2 smart phones, an iPad and a PC would grab 8 mg. This had not been understood but explained why the infrastructure was unable to provide the amount of traffic which was being demanded.

La Torre were due to be switched over to a maximum of 2 mg per household last week and HR will be switched in the near future. Those who operate multiple devices will notice a degradation in response times but limiting apartments to a maximum of the contracted 2 mg will benefit everyone as that is what the infrastructure has been designed to provide.

8 mg service

Those owners who have contracted for the 8 mg service have not been provided with the level of service which they have contracted for in part because of the mis-configuration. The band width available for 8 mg customers is flexed to accommodate changes in demand but has been fooled by the unrecognised excess 2 mg demands.

Checks are currently in place to ensure that all 8 mg customers are receiving the contracted service and all 8 mg customers are to receive two months free service as some compensation for their service issues.

2 mg service

As mentioned above, all households will be restricted to a total maximum of 2 mg rather than the 2 mg per device which they have enjoyed to date. This is what the contract provides and is entirely reasonable.

However, A2Z recognise that the 2 mg service has not been as reliable as it should have been and have offered a credit of 2€ per apartment in token compensation.

TV

A2Z have five satellite dishes each aimed at satellites serving different nationalities within our community. The UK channels are received via a 5 metre dish aimed at Sky's Astra satellite from which we are able to receive what are, in the UK, the free to air channels. The nominated channels received from all five dishes are melded together to provide the total of in excess of 200 channels which are available through the A2Z network.

Because we are so far south, the signal strength that we can receive is very weak and leaks when there is any wind. This affects picture quality and, with current technology, is beyond A2Z's ability to control.

There have been comments that the BBC channels were received from Gibraltar. This is an urban myth as ever since the PW TV offering began, BBC channels have always been received via Astra.

There have been owner complaints about channels going missing – recently ITV channels ceased to be available. This can happen when Astra change the “waveband” that a particular channel is broadcast over. In the UK this results in a simple re-tuning via Sky's phone or internet link but that is not available over here so A2Z have to react to advice of change from customers. Usually, when a channel is lost, they receive a number of calls which enables them to assess the loss as a channel move. When they only receive one call, they mistakenly assume that it is a problem unique to the individual.

User groups

A2Z proposed that we set up two user groups – one for the internet and one for TV.

These groups need to be made up of full time residents and will be the means by which A2Z can more readily identify resort wide issues which, in turn, will enable them to more promptly rectify matters.

In the event of the number of channels available exceeding the capacity to onward deliver them to owners, this group will have the remit to nominate which channels are collected and which are not.

Any volunteers to be included within these user groups should contact Nigel Bradbury.

Nigel Bradbury

President, Hacienda Riquelme Golf Resort