Review: USB Wi-Fi Modem E8372

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The Black USB Wi-Fi Modem is model E8372 (inc. car kit)
It operates at the following frequencies:
- 4G Bands (MHz)   LTE 700/1800/2300/2600MHz (4G)
- 3G Bands (MHz)   UMTS 900/2100 MHz
                                      (WCDMA, HSPA, HSPA+, DC-HSPA+)
- Speed   Up to Cat 4, 100/10Mbps (on Optus 4G)
- External Interface Standard USB 2.0 high speed
- Memory card   Standard micro SD card interface (to 32 GB)
- Wi-Fi   802.11 b/g/n, WPA2-PSK (default)
- System Required   Win XP SP3, Vista SP1/SP2, Win 7/8/8.1/10,
                                      Mac OS X 10.5/10.6/10.7/10.8

This modem connects to a computer USB socket or Car power socket and provides a Wi-Fi signal for up to 10 devices. It has two aerial sockets. Both aerials can operate in (Dual channel) DC-HSPA+ mode using two connections at the same frequency in order to double the throughput on a 3G network. The actual connection made can vary depending on the tower capabilities, the signal and the duty being performed.

Tested in normal and low signal areas it was found to be better than the standard USB modem. Firstly it is slightly faster on 4G, gives stronger stable reception and like the previous model will run down to a signal level of 1 bar or less without dropping out. Secondly the Wi-Fi and multiple power options make it versatile for many home or car situations.

Existing standard 3G SIMS can be used as the data cost is the same for both 3G and 4G, however this modem costs more than the standard USB model. Optus advise the APN varies with the SIM in use and can be "Optus Business", "Connectme", or "Connect". You can check this with Customer Care or just try each of these in the pre-sets provided.

The Outgoing email server can be mail.optusnet.com.au, but it is better to use smtp.office365.com with a mail rule, if you want to keep a record of outgoing emails. SMS messages can be received but not sent using a MelbPC Broadband only plan.

We recommend signing up at www.optuszoo.com.au to obtain usage data. To create a new logon you will need the SMS Service number for your SIM, which can be obtained from Customer Care. This method is more accurate than any 3rd party program, uses less resources and can be set to email you when usage is high.

By comparison with the Mini Wi-Fi modem it offers external aerial connections and is more compact and robust. However the Mini Wi-Fi is still useful where multiple devices are to be connected in the home and the signal is better in another room to the computer.