

High-Speed Modems

The high-speed modems that met the requirements f
that use the CCITT V.32bis standard for modulator

Product

U.S. Robotics Courier V.32bis

U.S. Robotics

8100 N. McCormick Blvd.

Skokie, IL 60076

(800) 342-5877

(708) 982-5010

Price: \$995

Intel 14.4EX

Intel Corp.

5200 NE Elam Young Pkwy.

Hillsboro, OR 97124

(800) 538-3373

(503) 629-7402

Price: \$699

Hayes V-series Ultra

Smartmodem 14400

Hayes Microcomputer Products

P.O. Box 105203

Atlanta, GA 30348

(404) 441-1617

Price: \$1,199

Codex 3260

Motorola Codex

20 Cabot Blvd.

Mansfield, MA 02048

(800) 544-0062

(508) 261-4000

Price: \$1,195

AT&T Paradyne Comsphere 3820

AT&T Paradyne
8545 126th Ave. North
Largo, FL 34649
(800) 482-3333
(813) 530-2000
Price: \$1,395

UDS V.3229
UDS Motorola
5000 Bradford Dr.
Huntsville, AL 35805
(800) 451-2369
(205) 430-8000
Price: \$1,145

Octocom OSI 8396
Octocom Systems
One Executive Dr.
Chelmsford, MA 01824
(508) 441-2181
Price: \$1,195

Microcom QX/4232bis
Microcom
500 River Ridge Dr.
Norwood, MA 02062
(800) 822-8224
(617) 551-1000
Price: \$899

Forval SA14400
Forval America
6985 Union Park Center, Suite 425
Midvale, UT 84047
(800) 367-8251
(801) 561-8080
Price: \$995

GVC SM144V
GVC Technologies

99 Demarest Rd.
Sparta, NJ 07871
(800) 289-4821
(201) 579-3630
Price: \$659

For the PC/Computing 200 are external units
and transfer data at 14,400 bits per second.

Evaluation

The U.S. Robotics Courier V.32bis takes top honors for excellent performance and complete, well-designed documentation. An outstanding feature of the Courier is a complete summary of the AT commands and S-registers silk-screened onto the bottom of the newly designed modem case. Every vendor should do this. This model is also available with U.S. Robotics' proprietary HST modulation scheme and with V.32bis, it's a BBS-hound's heaven.

The Intel 14.4EX wins hands down in price/performance. The modem ships in a well-designed, sturdy case, and the diagnostics disk that verifies that everything is working correctly earns Intel high marks for ease of installation. If cost is a consideration and you want a powerful high-speed modem, Intel's 14.4EX is for you.

You can't get more Hayes compatible than the Ultra 14400. Though this unit's middle-of-the-road performance comes at a premium price, you do get a two-year money-back guarantee from a company that will be around for some time. We'd like to see Hayes release a less expensive version of this modem as they did with the Optimait's guaranteed to be a winner.

The Mack truck of modems, the top-performing Codex 3260 handled most line impairments we threw its way. The Codex offers a 24-hour emergency exchange policy and a 90-day money-back guarantee. Installation was slowed, however, by the lengthy documentation required to explain its numerous features.

The most expensive of the modems here, the AT&T Paradyne

Comsphere 3820 was another good performer that handled all the line impairments we tried. This modem can download firmware updates that are stored in flash memory, and that means cheap and painless bug fixes and long-term feature enhancements. For the initial investment, you get a modem that you don't have to toss out as soon as another technology comes along.

The UDS V.3229 is a reliable unit from a company that has long manufactured modems for the corporate network market. The V.3229 is a solid performer, and it was able to handle tough line impairments. The V.3229 is pricey for a desktop modem, but if you have a variety of enterprisewide connectivity issues to address, it's very flexible and provides good value.

Octocom bills itself as "a leader in global networking solutions"; the downside is that the OSI 8396 isn't the best choice for desktop users. The documentation is better suited for someone already familiar with telecommunications terms and concepts. However, the company offers 24-hour technical support with additional support available via fax and a BBS.

Unique among the modems here, the Microcom QX/4232bis features MNP 10, a robust error-control and data-compression protocol that is well suited to those environments where the quality of the line changes often cellular links, for example. Microcom offers an emergency exchange program for its modems, but the warranty is for only one year and there's no 800 number for technical support.

A unique tower design allows you to mount the Forval SA14400 sideways if you need more space. Like the Comsphere, it lets you download firmware revisions over a regular phone line, which means you can get bug fixes or new features quickly and easily. Unfortunately, Forval's documentation wasn't up to the standards of the other vendors.

This was the lowest-priced modem we reviewed, but for \$40 more, we recommend the Intel 14.4EX over the GVC SM144V. The GVC's

documentation was outdated (listing such programs as PC Talk, WordStar 2000, and Symphony as certified applications) and could use amplification. The unit we received came with a manual for a 9600-bps modem; a 6-page addendum describes the 14,400-bps version.

Score

92

90

88

83

76

76

75

74

73

72