

# Solwise 3G Mi-Fi Power Bank

Andy Shaw looks at a handy device that combines mobile internet access and a battery booster in one pocket-sized box

**M**i-Fi devices are like mini-routers; they connect to mobile internet using a data-only SIM, then create a personal Wi-Fi hotspot you can carry around with you. This means that your Wi-Fi-only devices, such as tablets and laptops, can have full internet access wherever you go. The new Solwise 3G Mi-Fi Power Bank is an affordable 3G Mi-Fi in a pocketable package that goes one step further: it can also charge a tablet or phone if it starts running out of power.

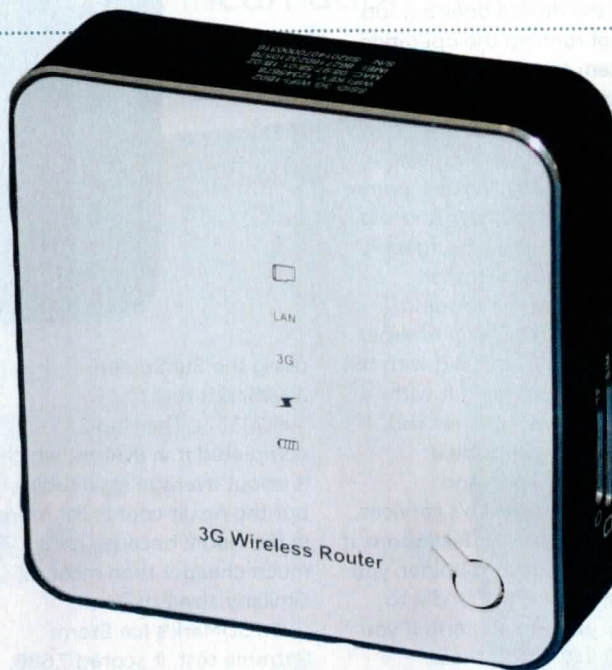
There are two types of 3G data masts in the UK and they use different frequencies:

900MHz and 2,100MHz. The Mi-Fi Power Bank only operates on the 2,100MHz band which means that it might not be able to pick up a 3G signal from O2 or Vodafone if there isn't a 2,100MHz mast in the area. Three and EE's 3G services use 2,100MHz exclusively, so the device is better suited to those networks.

We tested the device on the EE network. Getting the SIM activated was the most difficult part, because EE sends a text message with a code which you have to type on the website to activate the SIM. Without a screen, it was impossible to get this information from the Solwise device but a quick call to EE solved the problem. Once connected, everything worked smoothly and it was easy to add our tablet to the device's Wi-Fi network, the details of which are printed on the back of the unit.

The charging option is also very simple to use. The device has a USB socket that can accept any device's USB charging cable, which includes most phones and tablets. To get the quickest charge, you should turn off 3G and set the device to charge only, though it will still provide a trickle charge and keep your device alive if you plug it in while using the Mi-Fi as a router.

In our tests, it provided our iPad 2 with a 13-per-cent increase in battery power when plugged in for an hour. Adding 20 per cent more



“ The device is best suited to Three and EE's 3G services ”

battery took less than 90 minutes, but this drained the Mi-Fi Power Bank to the point that its own battery light started flashing red, which indicates that it's down to its last 10 per cent.

The device can also take a network connection from an Ethernet cable, so you could use it to convert a HomePlug into a Wi-Fi extender. It can also share media files from its microSD card slot.

## PRODUCT INFO

### Solwise 3G Mi-Fi Power Bank

[www.solwise.co.uk](http://www.solwise.co.uk)  
Price: £49.99

## SPECIFICATIONS

- 2G and 3G networking (restricted to 2,100MHz 3G)
- 7.2Mbps maximum download speed
- 5.76Mbps maximum upload speed
- WPA-PSK/PSK2 encryption
- Supports microSD cards up to 32GB
- 5000mAh battery capacity
- 76 x 76 x 22mm

## FOR

- ✓ Carry your own Wi-Fi hotspot
- ✓ Keeps batteries going for longer

## AGAINST

- ✗ Can't access all O2 and Vodafone's 3G masts

## OUR VERDICT



The Mi-Fi Power Bank is a versatile device ideally suited to people on the move. It can get your devices online with a 3G network; provide power when they're running out of battery; and share files through its microSD slot. There are some restrictions

FEATURES	★★★★☆
PERFORMANCE	★★★★☆
EASE OF USE	★★★★☆
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★★

on which networks it works best with, but data SIMs from both Three and EE should work fine.