

FirstRate5[®] technical support survey results

Overview

In 2014, Sustainability Victoria issued an online survey to gather feedback on the FirstRate5 technical support service, software, and certificate generation website. More than 250 FirstRate5 users completed the survey, and a number of opportunities for improvement have been identified to provide every user with a quality service experience.

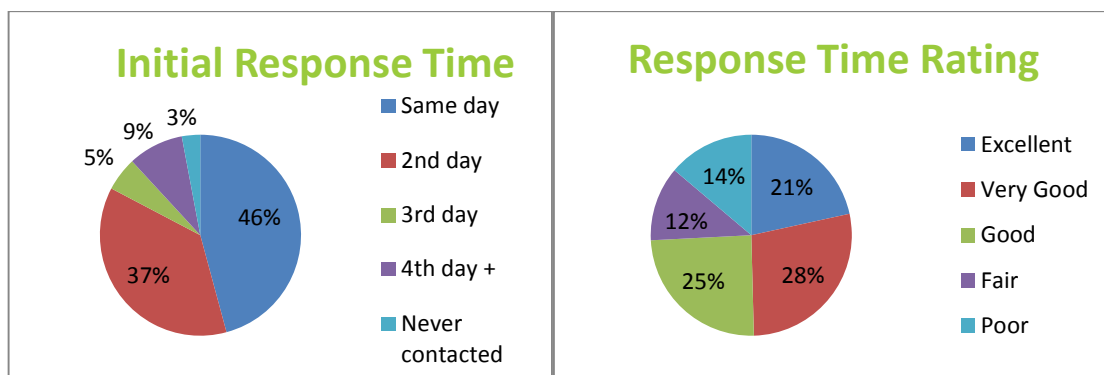
The survey results highlighted a need to communicate details of the FirstRate5 technical support service so that users know what to expect and how to get the most from the support services on offer. This document provides guidance on how users can best use the FirstRate5 technical support service, and provides additional advice such as what information users should include when submitting a query to allow for the quickest resolution of any issues.

Sustainability Victoria's would like to take this opportunity to thank all FirstRate5 users who responded to the survey and provided valuable feedback.

Results

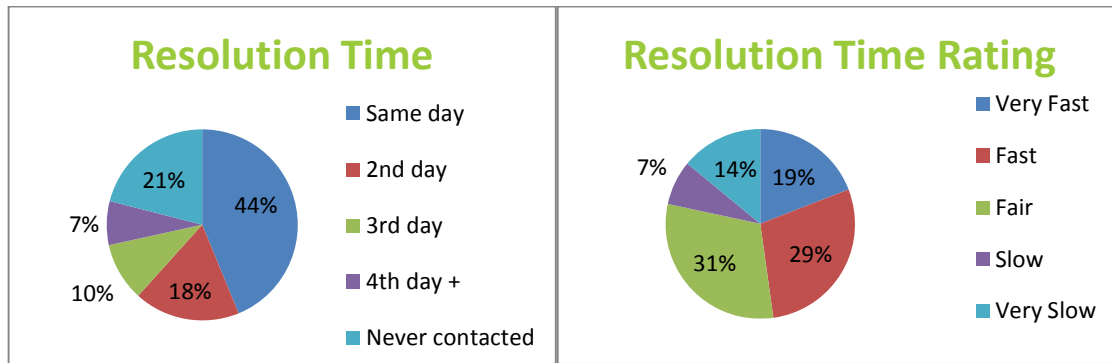
The 2014 User Support Survey showed that 88.1% of respondents reported that their queries were responded to within three days. The remaining 11.9% reported that they were contacted after the fourth day or never contacted.

Users were asked to rate this support response time to provide an indication of expectations. Responses showed 49.7% of users rated the response time as excellent or very good, 24.6% rated it as good, 12% rated it fair, and 13.8% rated it as poor.



Many software queries need to be referred to software engineers, resulting in resolution times that were greater than the initial response time. When asked about issue of resolution times, the survey showed that 43.8% of users reported that the time taken to resolve the issue was one day; 27.8% experienced a wait of between two and three days; and for 7.4% it took more than one week. 21% of users reported that their issue was never resolved.

When asked to rate this response time in terms of service, 47.8% of respondents considered the resolution time to be very fast or fast, 30.6% rated it fair, and 21.6% rated it slow or very slow.



The survey responses have helped the FirstRate5 support team to identify areas for improvement to the technical support offered to users. The FirstRate5 technical support service levels described below are designed to provide users with a high level of support and a positive experience with the tool.

Technical support levels

Service Levels standards for software technical support vary. Response times differ and it is not uncommon for companies to charge users for support services. For example, the AppleCare OS support for businesses charges its customers a fee that varies depending on the level of service wanted. By receiving the payment, Apple commits to provide an initial response time of one hour for priority issues on the highest support level, or 72 hours for questions and issues on the lower support level (<https://www.apple.com/support/products/enterprise/ossupport.html>).

Technical support is provided to FirstRate5 users in two stages. The first stage involves the review and actioning of queries by a Sustainability Victoria member of the FirstRate5 support team. When possible, responses to queries are provided directly to the user. On occasions, these are referred to other members of the FirstRate5 team with specific expertise in the software or online platform.

If the query cannot be resolved internally, it may be referred to the software engineers, which can extend the resolution time.

During high volume periods, e.g., around software release dates, response times can be longer.

The end user licence agreement outlines the FirstRate5 technical support as follows:

Sustainability Victoria will provide you with limited email support in relation to the FirstRate5 software.

1. In order to be eligible for this support, you must:
 - (a) have registered an account on www.fr5.com.au; and
 - (b) have a current balance in your account of at least one Certificate Credit.

2. If you meet these eligibility criteria, Sustainability Victoria will provide reasonable assistance to you via email only, during Sustainability Victoria's usual business hours, with:
 - (a) problems or issues relating to the installation of the FirstRate5 software; and
 - (b) abnormal errors or bugs encountered when using the FirstRate5 software.
3. This support specifically excludes assistance:
 - (a) for any versions of the FirstRate5 software other than the most current version;
 - (b) relating to the normal operation or use of the FirstRate5 software (in respect of which you must consult the software's documentation);
 - (c) with problems, issues or errors arising from installation or use of the FirstRate5 software in a manner contrary to the software's documentation or otherwise arising from improper use of the FirstRate5 software; or
 - (d) with hardware, operating systems or third party software.

Other support

Existing resources such as the FirstRate5 user manual installed on users' computers, or the FAQs, guidance notes and instructional videos available on the website, may provide the answers required, and users are encouraged to refer to these resources prior to contacting the FirstRate5 technical support team.

FirstRate5 feature queries?

The FirstRate5 User Manual contains feature descriptions and other useful information. It is installed with the software and can be found on users' computers (typically Start Menu >Program Files>FirstRate5>FirstRate5 Manual). This .pdf document is searchable by keyword.

Modelling queries?

Instruction on how to use the FirstRate5 software is provided through training courses provided by Registered Training Organisations (RTOs). More detailed information can be found on the accreditation section of the website (<https://www.fr5.com.au/accreditation>).

For advanced modelling situations please refer to the frequently asked questions on the FirstRate5 website - www.fr5.com.au/faqs.

Finally, while software support is not provided by the Assessor Accrediting Organisations (BDVA and ABSA), they may issue additional modelling guidance and practice notes from time to time.

Certificate generation queries?

If you are having difficulty producing a Compliance Certificate using the Certificate Generation Website (www.fr5.com.au), please see the FAQs - www.fr5.com.au/faqs.

Regulatory queries?

For questions related to the interpretation of building control regulations (e.g. does my building require a thermal performance assessment?) please contact the Victorian Building Authority (VBA) in Victoria or the appropriate building control authority in your state or territory. For users in Victoria the VBA's Practice Note 2011-55 Residential Sustainability Measures contains useful information.

Scheme queries?

If your query relates to the 'rules' of the NatHERS scheme (e.g. how should I zone a second living space?) please refer in the first instance to the Technical Notes released by NatHERS:

- NatHERS Technical Note 1 (version 1.1 - 2013) – NatHERS Principles for Rating in Regulation Mode
- NatHERS Technical Note 2 (version 1.0 - 2012) – NatHERS Guidance for Calculating Ceiling Penetrations.

If your query is not covered here you should contact NatHERS through your Assessor Accrediting Organisation (BDAV or ABSA).

Method of contact

Email contact is preferred. It allows the transfer of project files, and provides the FirstRate5 support team the opportunity to test the software/platform and consult with team members before responding. Users should submit queries to support@fr5.com.au.

Hours of operation

9 am to 5 pm Monday to Friday

What can I do to make sure my query is answered quickly?

Providing certain information can help Sustainability Victoria provide you with a timely response. Please always include your name and FR5 account name on the emails you send us, and as much detail as possible about the issue.

Specific information that helps reduce the response and resolution time for queries includes:

- Your name
- Your FR5 account name
- The FR5 software version you are using
- The version of Java you have installed
- Issue description –When describing the issue please give as much information as possible. With both the software and the website different actions or inactions trigger different errors. For example, you may experience trouble producing a certificate and send the support team an email. However, the source of the issue may be related to an earlier stage of the process. A good description of the issue helps the support team work quickly to identify the problem and resolve this.

Software updates

FirstRate5 is a complex software tool that needs regular updates (minor releases) to fix bugs and provide functionality and usability improvements. More significant upgrades occur less frequently, and are undertaken to comply with the NatHERS requirements and to maintain accreditation under the NatHERS scheme.

Minor releases involving a letter change, e.g., v5.1.11b to v5.1.11c, will overwrite the previous version, while major releases involving a number change, e.g., v5.1.10 to v5.1.11, will install beside older versions.

Many software packages need frequent updates and upgrades for security reasons, program enhancements, and bug fixing. For example, desktop updates of Java or antiviruses, and the frequent operating system and application updates on smartphones or tablets. The objective of every software update and upgrade is to provide a more accurate and functional FirstRate5 tool. They may result in slight changes in energy loads and a different star rating result. Users need to be mindful of these dissimilarities when new software releases are announced and prepare their businesses for it. Where a release is certain to change star ratings Sustainability Victoria will work to ensure users are aware of the changes in advance.