

# Connections

An Update from BT Scotland

March 2007



## A CLIMATE OF CHANGE: BT commits to carbon busting strategy

BT is one of Scotland's largest private sector employees, with major presence and buildings in every local authority area and a mobile fleet of engineers responsible for the country's 2.3 million communication lines.

So the green agenda has a special resonance for the company, both as a significant consumer of energy and as a provider of information and communication technologies that could have a major impact on national consumption.

The company has set out its strategy to tackle climate change, making a series of environmental pledges. Its key commitments are to: reduce emissions; influence the supply chain to produce lower carbon-emitting products; influence customers by proposing lower carbon solutions; and engage with its 104,000 strong workforce to reduce their personal carbon footprints and influence their local communities.

Carbon emissions are already down by 60 per cent between 1996 and 2006. The company now aims to extend that reduction to 80 per cent by 2016.

A complete review of its energy supply, including exploring the further potential of wind, will take place, and energy consumption and environmental factors will be incorporated into procurement processes.

The company has also extended its green energy contract – one of the biggest in the world – to 2010. This will save the equivalent amount of carbon as that resulting from the electricity consumption of more than 300,000 households – roughly the size of Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Dunfermline combined – every year.

BT's commitment is being driven from the top. Chief executive Ben Verwaayen is chairing the CBI's climate



***Going green: Ian Shanks says a flexible work style can benefit the environment, employees and employers.***

change task force, established to set the agenda on how business tackles climate change.

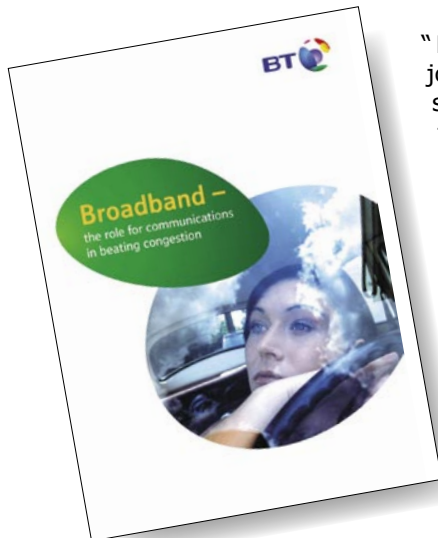
Ian Shanks, BT's head of Scottish Affairs, is one of more than 70 per cent of BT people already working flexibly, including from home some or all of the time. Based from the office of his home in rural West Aberdeenshire, he is an enthusiastic advocate of using technology to minimise unnecessary journeys.

Previously Ian faced a 45 minute commute in rush hour traffic into central Aberdeen. There are still occasions when he does travel to meetings by car, but these are outside peak travel times, avoiding the need to sit in stationary traffic while exhaust fumes spill into the atmosphere. Other forms of transport allow him to use travel time productively using simple tools – a mobile phone and wireless Blackberry.

## Contact

***For further information on BT in Scotland visit our website at [www.bt.com/scotland](http://www.bt.com/scotland) or contact Brendan Dick, general manager of BT Scotland, by e-mail: [brendan.dick@bt.com](mailto:brendan.dick@bt.com)***

"Flexible working has a number of benefits that touch the environmental agenda," said Ian. "It has the potential to cut the worst peak traffic by up to 10 per cent within five years – a reduction that would save literally millions of miles a year.



"Making one-in-10 journeys on the digital superhighway, rather than by road, could save up to three years' car traffic growth.

"In turn such changes mean less pollution, better air quality and less energy use. With fewer commuters on the road each day, congestion is reduced and carbon emissions are lowered.

"It makes sense from an economic viewpoint too – researchers say the benefits to the UK economy in reduced congestion costs could be as much as £1.9 billion by 2010.

"Our experience is that flexible working saves our employees an equivalent of 1,800 years of commuting and an average 12 million litres of car fuel a year – imagine the impact we could have if other large organisations followed suite."

Statistics used by Ian Shanks are taken from the BT report *Broadband - the role for communications in beating congestion* which brought together research from several authoritative sources in one document. It is available here:

<http://www.btplc.com/Thegroup/Regulatoryinformation/Consultativeresponses/BTdiscussionpapers/Congestion/Congestionreport.htm>

## BT helps council benefits system go online

A new system developed with the help of BT and other technology providers, which enables Edinburgh residents to complete and track the progress of their Housing and Council Tax Benefit claims online, has been launched.

The system was developed by the City of Edinburgh Council and is being implemented by BT as part of a 15-year strategic IT partnership

Benefits Online replaces a complex, 28-page form that many customers found challenging, with a high proportion being returned incomplete. This led to delays in benefit payments while the Council followed up with customers for further information.

In contrast, the new system provides unambiguous information to the Council and gives the customer an immediate estimate of the amount of benefit they are likely to receive, based on standard criteria such as income, rent and other benefits.

The online version aids claimants by ensuring they only have to answer the questions directly relevant to their circumstances. The online instructions and information on screen also make it easier to fill in the form.

Ian Willcox, programme delivery director, BT Global Services, said: "This project is a genuine win-win for both the citizen and the Council and is an excellent exemplar of how its Smart City vision, allied to a 15 year strategic partnership with BT, is delivering practical IT solutions making a real difference to people's lives."

Councillor Donald Wilson, Executive Member for Smart City at The City of Edinburgh Council, said: "Benefits Online will radically improve the service we offer and is a clear example of how new technology can offer tangible benefits to citizens, whilst improving business processes and effectiveness for the Council.

"It will help some of the most vulnerable citizens in the city by making it easier to put in the applications in the first place and by helping them to keep track of how that application is doing. It is a much fairer and more efficient way of providing the service."

In 2006, the Benefits Online system won a Bronze Award from the Confederation of Scottish Local Authorities (CoSLA) in the Innovative Use of Technology Category.

## Registers of Scotland / BT project scoops IT award

BT's strategic IT partnership with Registers of Scotland (RoS) has been named the winner of the e-GIF Public Sector Award in the British Computer Society IT Professional Awards. The e-Government Interoperability Framework (e-GIF) aims to promote common standards and interoperable systems across the public sector. "I'm really pleased with this win," said RoS programme director Mark Hawes. "We have worked hard to place e-GIF/OpenScotland Information Age Framework standards at the heart of RoS's developing enterprise architecture, and this award recognises our proactive approach."

**BT Group business Openreach has just marked its first year in operation. Director for Scotland Bob Downes reflects on some of the highs and lows...**

### **Remind me, what is Openreach all about?**

Openreach was created as a result of the Undertakings made by BT following Ofcom's 2004/05 review of the telecommunications market. It's responsible for the UK's access and backhaul network – the wires, fibres and connections that link homes and offices around the country to the local telephone exchange. The big difference is that Openreach operates on behalf of communications providers across the industry – ensuring all have a level playing field on which to offer their products and services.

### **And what is the scale of Openreach in Scotland?**

We employ around 2,400 people in Scotland, including more than 2,000 engineers. Collectively, they climb around 36,500 telegraph poles in a year - like scaling Ben Nevis 128 times annually. Every day they visit around 900 homes and businesses to install new lines, make repairs and upgrade services. Our network includes almost three million lines running from 1070 exchanges, carrying 30 million calls and transactions a day.

### **What have been the major challenges in your first year?**

Getting an organisation of this size off the ground was always going to be a challenge, requiring major structural, procedural and cultural change. Ofcom described it as the biggest reorganisation BT has gone through.

In the middle of the year we experienced unprecedented demand for local loop unbundling – the process that releases lines to communications providers who install their own equipment in BT exchanges. We knuckled down, made big improvements and invested in quality, transparent



***"I am proud to lead such a dedicated team"***  
**Bob Downes, Director of Openreach Scotland**

systems. Work will be ongoing as the changing market continues to present significant challenges.

UK wide we now have 1.5 million unbundled local lines, but demand for LLU is lagging behind in Scotland compared to other parts of the UK. In recent weeks this has started to speed up, but there is a long way to go. Market competition and consumer demand will be key drivers.

### **And the major successes?**

Delivery of backhaul infrastructure associated with local loop unbundling has been a real success story for Scotland, opening up the market for service providers to offer a new range of products and services. So far we've installed more than 450km of new cable – laid end to end it would stretch from John O'Groats to Glasgow. In our first nine months we invested around £80 million in Scotland's access network. We delivered service at major Scottish events including the Dunhill Cup, T in the Park and the Northern Ireland peace talks in St Andrews, in the latter case completing a job that would normally take two weeks in two days. And devolved responsibility means localised issues are managed effectively.

### **What do you see as the key issues for 2007?**

The question of next generation

broadband speeds is going to be fundamental. As digital networks get faster, more and more new products and services will be coming on to the market. It is all about making sure that the infrastructure is in place to deliver regardless of location. Everyone with an interest in an inclusive digital economy will need to look at this closely.

Cutting our carbon footprint will be high on the agenda. And of course while we have advanced contingency plans in place, we cannot always predict the weather!

### **So you keep a careful eye on the weather forecasts these days?**

The feeling at home is that I have become obsessed with the weather, which can have a major impact on our service levels. But our engineers never fail to amaze me with their willingness to go the extra mile. Over the winter they braved mountain blizzards, high winds, 10 foot waves and flooding streams to restore communications, carrying out safety assessments with regard to each potential hazard but paying little heed to personal discomfort. They play a pivotal role in society and I am proud to lead such an exceptional and dedicated team of people.

A project introduced by BT in the battle against online sexual abuse of children has been exported to Canada. BT's Project Cleanfeed, a screening technology solution launched in the UK in 2004, blocks websites identified by the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) as containing images of child sexual abuse hosted outside the United Kingdom. Around 35,000 instances of illegal abuse images of children are being blocked every day.

The launch of Project Cleanfeed Canada follows two years of collaboration between BT and Canadian Internet Service Providers (ISPs), who have joined forces with Canada's child sexual exploitation reporting site in the initiative. BT is committed to sharing its technology and experience and as well as Canada it is also being used in many other countries including the USA, Norway, Sweden and Denmark.

BT has also developed its own child online safety guide for children, parents, guardians and teachers called The Internet Green X Code which can be accessed at [www.bt.com/education/funstuff](http://www.bt.com/education/funstuff)

## Communities – Internet Rangers

An 11-year-old internet whiz kid from Aberdeenshire has won a top award for teaching his mum to use a computer and surf the net.

Scott Campbell from Dunecht beat off competition from hundreds of internet-savvy youngsters around the country to become the Scottish winner of the BT Internet Ranger of the Year Awards.

He was presented with a laptop after a nationwide hunt to find and reward young people who are helping older generations get online.

Scott impressed the judges by describing the challenge he faced when he decided to teach his mum, Susan, to use the internet.

Ian Shanks, head of Scottish affairs at BT Scotland, said: "Many Scots don't have the skills or the confidence to get online, and as a result they are missing out on valuable information and access to cheaper goods and services.

"For many, it is simply the fear of trying something new that prevents them from having a go, but, as demonstrated by Scott, young people can make wonderful internet teachers."

[www.btinternetangers.co.uk](http://www.btinternetangers.co.uk)



**Checking out the laptop prize are Scott, mum Susan, sister Katie and cat Tango.**

## Communities – Internet Rangers

A new web site has been launched to educate children about premium rate services: [www.phonebrain.org.uk](http://www.phonebrain.org.uk). It is the brainchild of ICSTIS, the regulatory body for the premium rate telecommunications industry, working with BT and other organisations. With a staggering 65 per cent of children aged 8-15 now owning a mobile phone, 72 per cent having access to digital TV at home and 65 per cent having access to the internet at home, children have more exposure to premium rate services than ever before.

The new site is fun, interactive and relevant and aims to help both children and their parents understand how premium rate services work and appreciate the costs involved, as well as giving advice about the safe and sensible use of these services.

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