

Assembly Briefing

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Surf BT's new broadband wave

BT has announced a new wave broadband service in Wales to answer the needs of the growing number of towns and cities that require business-class broadband services.

SDSL offers a different type of broadband experience than asymmetrical broadband services (ADSL). Whereas ADSL delivers higher speeds to users that want to download large files, SDSL allows users to both send and receive data at high speeds. This makes SDSL an ideal form of broadband connectivity for any Welsh business, remote office or teleworker.

On completion of the roll-out programme, SDSL enabled exchanges will bring high speed symmetrical broadband services to over two-thirds of UK businesses.

Nineteen of these exchanges are in Wales - Bridgend, Cardiff Central, Newport, Roath, Wrexham, Swansea Main, Morriston, Barry, Cwmbran, Whitchurch, Llanelli, Caerphilly, Llandudno, Port Talbot, Merthyr Tydfil, Carmarthen, Rhyl, Pontypridd, and Neath.

Ann Beynon, BT Director Wales, said: "Wales is synonymous with small and medium sized businesses, remote offices and teleworkers and I am delighted that they will benefit from this valuable business-class broadband service."

Super fast broadband at no extra cost

BT customers will be able to work faster and download information quicker than ever before **and** at no extra cost.

BT's 1.4 million retail broadband customers will transfer to a new super-fast standard. Most customers will have their speed increased up to 2 Mb - as much as four times faster than current speeds. Those with BT Broadband Basic will have their speed increased from 512k up to 1 Mb.

Ian Livingston, CEO for BT Retail said: "This will allow customers to get even more from their broadband services. These higher speeds will pave the way for new services such as video-over-broadband and also allow customers to get more from multiple connections. This will be ideal for families, for example, allowing them to simultaneously connect a PC, laptop, games console, or other internet-enabled device.

The internet is no longer simply about surfing the web or checking email. More and more people are enjoying online gaming, on-demand music and video over the net.

It will also help businesses maximise the massive opportunities offered by on-line trading and teleworking. Broadband is critical for business so therefore in addition to 2Mb as standard, BT are introducing a service level guarantee on the premium business product.

UK consumers and businesses deserve to get the full benefit today of tomorrow's broadband applications and services. It's time to get the most from the internet.'

New speeds will become effective for new residential customers from February 17 and for new business customers from April 1. Migration of existing customers will start from the same dates.

For further information or queries relating to this newsletter please contact bt.wales.cymru@bt.com



Cardiff weaves a bigger web

The Cardiff Wi-Fi initiative 'City on the move' has now extended its reach to cover new parts of the City Centre and Cardiff Bay area.

'City on the Move', a joint project between Cardiff Council and BT Openzone has ensured that the Welsh capital is at the forefront of broadband technology through the roll-out of Wi-Fi.

Wi-Fi from BT Openzone allows anyone in the city centre with a wireless enabled laptop or PDA (personal digital assistant) to have access to the same high speed internet broadband as if they were at home or in the office.

Coverage will now include Cardiff Council's headquarters at County Hall, part of the prestigious Wales Millennium Centre and café areas in front of the new Assembly debating chamber. This is in addition to the original project - linking together coverage of the city centre and Mermaid Quay development.

Since the project commenced one year ago the number of Wi-Fi hotspots in the city has doubled from 50 to 100 including 18 under the 'City on the Move' partnership.

Cardiff Council is set to provide all elected members with Wi-Fi access at home through their own corporate network in addition to BT Openzone access across the city and Bay area. The Council is unique in the extent to which it is offering its members and senior officials access to important information whilst at home or on the move across the city through Wi-Fi and is already providing training through a BT Openzone hotspot at County Hall.

The service is also supplementing the support of local businesses wishing to use the freedom of secure wireless access via the BT Openzone service, which is now available from £10 a month.

For further information visit: www.btopenzone.com

OFCOM UK telecomms review

Ofcom commenced a Strategic Review of the UK telecoms industry in 2003, which has three phases and is scheduled to end in Spring 2005. The objectives for the Review are to determine a new regulatory framework that keeps pace with technology, ensures continuing investment, and encourages innovation.

Rapid response leads to world fundraising record

BT's Cardiff Data Centre has played a key role in setting a new world fundraising record.

The £90 million centre, which opened just under two years ago, is hosting the Disasters Emergency Committee website to raise money for victims of the Tsunami disaster.

To date over £40 million has been pledged in donations through the site and the Guinness Book of Records has now confirmed that the record for the number of individual on line donations in any 24 hour period has been broken with 166,936 donations.

(Between 6.16pm on 30 December and 6.16pm the following day, the DEC website - with the help of BT, its volunteers and the increased capacity it provided - received 166,936 donations, raising £10,676,836 for the appeal. This is the most money ever donated online in 24 hours.)

Those donations pledged £10.676 million between 6.15pm on December 30 and 6.15pm on December 31.

The website, using the Children in Need donations platform was set up and working within five hours after it was discovered the existing site was struggling to cope.

Steve Smith said: "We offered our help to the DEC, and once we got the go ahead we had to work extremely quickly. It was hard work, but a fantastic effort to get the site up and running in such short timescales. And it was worth it when in the first hour £1 million was taken in donations.

"Such has been the massive response from the public that and the success of the site, that it is likely even more records may be broken for the amount raised in that amazing 24 hour period and the total overall."

BT halfway home in Ynys Môn

Ynys Môn MP Albert Owen has hailed the switching on of broadband at Llanfaethlu on 19th January as an important step forward for the area. High speed internet technology is now available to another 860 households, meaning that half of Anglesey's residents now have access to the technology.

Albert Owen MP was present at Llanfaethlu for the switch-on and commented: "I am delighted that the people of Llanfaethlu will now have the chance to experience the greater speed and efficiency this technology can bring to individuals and businesses alike.

"We are now rapidly moving towards a time when broadband will be available to almost all residents on Anglesey but what is important is that those who do have access to broadband, now take advantage of the benefits it can bring."

The switch-on at Llanfaethlu took Wales ever closer to BT's promise to make broadband available to 99 per cent of the population of Wales by summer 2005.

21CN

BT's 21st Century Network programme delivers the next generation of converged services to its retail and wholesale customers faster, more efficiently and more cost effectively than ever before. 21CN is the enabling infrastructure for growth - not only for BT, but for the UK communications industry.

Star studded night for ChildLine Cymru/Wales

Welsh Stars recently came together for the first ChildLine Cymru/Wales Ball to raise much needed funds for the helpline.

Classical singing sensation Katherine Jenkins, HTV presenter Lucy Owen and Ruth Madoc all supported the event making it an unforgettable experience for all the guests.

A fantastic £1290 was made on the night through the raffle, games and celebrity auction, there was also some fierce bidding for the signed Welsh rugby shirt and tickets to see Katherine Jenkins' concert in St David's Hall.

This amount is the equivalent to the cost of answering calls from 430 children and young people who call ChildLine Cymru/Wales looking for help, comfort and advice.

Louise Atkinson, Regional Fundraiser for ChildLine Cymru/Wales, said 'I would like to thank all the people who came along and supported ChildLine Cymru/Wales' first ever ball in Cardiff. None of this could have been achieved without the support of BT Wales who were the main sponsors of the evening, for which we are extremely grateful.'

Ann Beynon, BT Director Wales added 'Every day around 300 children call ChildLine Cymru/Wales, but lack of funds means that only half of them will get through to the counsellors. BT Wales were delighted to support this fun event in order to help ChildLine Cymru/Wales achieve their promise to children of answering every child's call for help.'



Making home-working a reality in Wales

Debbie Green, the Finance and Resources Director at Chwarae Teg (Fair Play), is using communications technology to manage her own work life balance, thanks to a little help from BT.

Mum to seven year old Ella, she has been able to work from home for the past 18 months due to BT's Wales-wide ICT (Information Communications Technology) strategy to boost inter-office communications.

Research has shown that an increasing number of women in Wales would become economically active if they could work more flexibly, balancing work and home life

Debbie said: "The investment allows me extra flexibility. I can access all my work files including email and my calendar. The ICT investment has also made it easier for me to pick Ella up from school, give her tea and also to spend more time with her during the school holidays."



On the search for Newport's Silver Surfer of 2005

As part of a national initiative, BT has formed a unique partnership with the UK charity Citizens Online to bring its 'Everybody Online' programme to areas of Wales where internet take up is below the national average.

There are eight Everybody Online projects in the UK, three of which are in Wales: Bettws in Newport, Clydach Vale in the Rhondda and Rhyl in North Wales.

The objectives of the projects are to find innovative and creative ways to overcome the barriers that deter people from taking advantage of the opportunities that exist on the internet and from having at least basic ICT skills.

The Everybody Online project based in Newport, along with Charter Housing is looking for Newport's Silver Surfer of 2005.

They want to hear stories about how the Internet has helped, whether this means creation of a website, research into family trees, shopping online or using email to keep in contact with friends and family.

Anyone over 50, living within the Newport City Council area and using the Internet, could win a digital camera package including a digital photography course from Newport Adult Education.

The competition is open until 31st April 2005, with the winner being announced on Silver Surfer Day - 29th May 2005.

For further information or to enter please contact Helen Kell on 01633 857048 or email Helen@citizensonline.org.uk

Digital networked economy

Today the meaning of 'networks' has been re-defined. It's no longer just about connecting one point to another. This integration of technologies is revolutionizing business models and creating ever greater efficiencies and responsiveness in the way business is done.