



BT and Digital inclusion

BT Social and
Environmental report



THE QUEEN'S AWARDS
FOR ENTERPRISE:
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
2003

BT and Digital inclusion

Access to information and communications technology can improve people's lives and open doors to education, jobs, entertainment and personal contacts. But many people do not yet have the opportunity or the necessary skills to use the technology.

We want everyone to participate in the digital revolution. Here we discuss how we promote digital inclusion in three ways:

- Provide greater access to communications technology – **Connectivity**
- Encourage communication and its use for social and economic benefit – **Content**
- Help groups and individuals use technology – **Capability**.

See our short case studies at the end of this document for examples of our work to promote inclusion.

Connectivity

If people are to benefit from the internet they need to be connected to it. We provide a range of different connections, from home dial-up lines to internet kiosks and high-speed broadband. See the BT Retail website for our products and services.

Broadband, which provides a fast 'always-on' connection to the internet via a conventional telephone line, is the most significant technical advance for consumers and small businesses. Its availability promotes social inclusion.

Telephone exchanges have to be upgraded to provide broadband. Because of the cost, this is being done gradually in the UK, often working with partners in government and regional development agencies.

As of 31 March 2004, more than 85% of the UK's homes and businesses were connected to broadband enabled exchanges. We have set out a road map that will see broadband available to exchanges serving over 99% of UK homes and businesses by summer 2005.

New approaches

We are developing new marketing approaches to ensure we spread the benefits of broadband as widely as possible. For example, a pioneering project, called ADSL Exchange Activate, is designed to bring broadband to small communities. It relies on sponsors – parish councils, town councils and regional bodies – to promote demand.

By 2005, BT will have invested around £22 million in setting up a total of 35 public private partnerships across the UK to bring broadband to areas where exchanges had not been enabled.

In Cornwall, UK, a European Union funded partnership project, ACTNOW, offers subsidised packages to small businesses. Further information is available at: www.actnowcornwall.co.uk

Our 1,200 internet kiosks (advanced payphones) offer telephone services, internet access, email and text messaging. We plan to have a total of 20,000 kiosks by 2007.

We are developing wireless networks in public places that will enable people to use their portable computers to access the internet. Our network of Openzone access points – currently more than 2,000 – are available at airports, hotels, railway stations and fast-food outlets.

Driving demand

We hope that the purchasing power of the public sector could drive demand even faster.

For example, the UK Government's plans to provide schools and doctors' surgeries with broadband would benefit the whole community.

A Government project called Broadband Aggregation aims to combine the purchasing power of government departments to make it more affordable for service providers to supply broadband to smaller communities. This initiative will accelerate delivery of broadband infrastructure to help more UK communities and businesses to realise the benefits of high-speed internet access, while delivering better value for customers and savings to taxpayers.

The UK has set a target for the country to be the most extensive and competitive broadband market in the G7 group of countries by 2005.

This is expected to enhance the productivity of business and regions and the economy as a whole. Other benefits include better education (from the provision of online curriculum materials) and decreased congestion (from more teleworking).

Education

Broadband has the potential to distribute high-quality curriculum materials to all pupils. BT's LearningStream 8 and LearningStream 34 services have been designed specifically for education. They can be used by schools, colleges and public learning centres to create online learning communities and share resources. They can help to build learning communities by linking schools, colleges, libraries, learning centres and Citizens Advice Bureaux.

In the financial year 2004, we launched a trial of Broadband Central – a new online broadband community aimed at bringing broadband users together to share their experience of using broadband.

For more information, visit Broadband Central at: www.ecademy.com/broadbandcentral and BT Education at: www.bt.com/education.

Contributing to the public debate

We are active members of the Broadband Stakeholder Group (BSG), the UK Government's multi-sector advisory group on broadband. Although the BSG has largely focused on the extension of broadband coverage and competition, it now sees a need to accelerate demand and create compelling commercial and public service content.

Reports

Connected Community Organisations – Can They Help to Overcome the Digital Divide?, SustainIT, December 2003

'Broadband use by community organisations can help to overcome the digital divide, as well as breaking down social barriers and improving organisational effectiveness. It can also extend and deepen their links with external bodies – but only if the organisation already has a culture which recognises the importance of

organisational networking.'

'Broadband has helped to overcome social barriers between users and had a very significant or significant impact on the community – although the forms this takes varies between organisations'

This report is available as a PDF download in our online report.

Sustainable Development in Broadband Britain, Forum for the Future March 2004. This report is available as a download PDF in the Sustainability section of our online Social and Environmental report.

'Broadband internet access provides the opportunity to enhance and multiply social ties, though in some cases may also contribute to social isolation.

Fast, always-on internet access makes a wide range of applications more user-friendly and more likely to be successfully employed. Reports list areas from education and health to democratic participation and agriculture as areas that are likely to benefit.'

Content

While the amount of information on the internet is vast, there is still a great need for content that brings benefits to communities, small businesses and individuals. This is why we work with others to promote new content (see examples in the case studies section of this document). These are some of the organisations we have helped:

- **Charities** – We have teamed up with ik.com, a business providing specialist internet solutions, to make free, simple-to-build websites available to UK charities and community groups (see our charities website leaflet for more information). This is an extension of our existing work with UK schools. Four thousand schools have already created some excellent new sites, developed and maintained by pupils and teachers. (See our case study on how a mountain rescue team benefited).
- **Connected Earth** – This museum on the internet, launched in 2002, is one of the largest virtual museums, providing



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information on the history of telecommunications (For more information, visit Connected Earth at: www.connectedearth.org)

- **Leeds Learning Network** – Formed by BT and Leeds City Council in the UK to connect schools, libraries and museums throughout Leeds on a single network, the project offers the whole community an invaluable educational resource.
- **NHSnet with Cable & Wireless** – We work with the UK National Health Service to supply a world-class secure intranet. Introduced in 1995, this multi-media resource is transforming the way health professionals work. It enables the delivery of electronic healthcare and more efficient administration.
- **Tate Online** – We sponsor the UK's leading modern art museum's virtual gallery, the UK's most visited arts website. The site is powered by BT, which provides technical support, hosting and online broadcasting. (For more information, visit Tate online at: www.tate.org.uk.)
- **TimeBank** – TimeBank is a UK-based national voluntary campaign raising the awareness of giving time through voluntary work. The website site matches volunteers' time and skills to the needs of local organisations.
- **UK National Council for Voluntary Organisations** – The Council's website provides a comprehensive online resource for voluntary organisations.

BT Education provides content aimed at teachers, parents and children. This includes:

- **BT Learning Centre** – This is an online learning subscription service for home users, tailor-made for specific age groups. This service provides pupils with the same or similar content to that available in schools to help give them a step up the educational ladder. We have also been working with leading UK education content providers including Actis, Netmedia Education, Cyber Mind and Granada Learning to bring a wide range of education titles into the service. Free content is available to subscribers and non-subscribers and provides links to other educational sites such as GridClub, NGfL, museums and others.

For more information, visit the BT Learning Centre at: www.btopenworld.com/thelearningcentre and see our case study on grandparents and computers at the end of this document.

- **BT Resource Bank** – resources for teachers, parents and children on communication skills, including animated tutorials, quizzes and classroom activities. For more information, visit the Resource Bank at: www.btplc.com/ict/index.cfm.

Recognising good practice

We sponsor SustainIT's eWell-Being Awards (see www.sustainit.org/ewell-being/ewb_awards.htm), which recognise the effective use of information communications technology to bring environmental, economic and social benefits.

We support the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in Practice Awards, organised by the British Educational Communications and Technology Agency (BECTA). The Awards identify and promote best practice in ICT and education.

Capability

We have launched a digital inclusion campaign to demonstrate how communications can help improve society, and to support the UK Government's aim to give all citizens online access by 2005.

A key element of the campaign is the **Everybodyonline** programme, supported by BT. The project is run by Citizens Online (www.citizenonline.org.uk), a UK-based charity promoting the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) for all members of the community.

Working with local governments, communities and service providers, EverybodyOnline aims to ensure that those people disadvantaged by location, lack of skills, or economic factors do not miss out on the benefits of new technology.

Everybodyonline is being piloted in several small disadvantaged communities in the UK. The communities are the size of an electoral ward and have been chosen because they have below-average household internet connectivity. They rank among the most disadvantaged

communities in the UK on the multiple deprivation index.

Project officers have been appointed in each location, with four key tasks:

- Local audit – to identify key local issues, to map availability of local public access points; and training providers and potential partners
- Local action plan – to establish a steering group and design a locally-owned action plan using ICT to address key local issues
- Delivery – to facilitate activities to improve awareness of ICT and to demonstrate the benefits of being online
- Monitoring – to capture data, case studies, examples of good practice, feedback and follow-ups.

In the 2004 financial year, Everybodyonline has been running taster sessions where project officers equipped with wireless laptops visit places where people meet, such as community centres, retirement homes and church halls. People are encouraged to try out the technology and explore the opportunities provided online. The sessions have proved popular and some early participants now confidently shop and bank online.

See our case study about Margaret's experience at the Welbeck Green Bungalows' taster session.

"The real value of the Everybodyonline project is its use of ICT as a tool for engaging with a community and helping the most disadvantaged acquire skills which may lead to new life opportunities." John Fisher, Chief Executive of Citizens Online.

For more information, visit Everybodyonline at: www.everybodyonline.org.uk and see our case studies.

Free PCs and connection for community groups and charities

BT Community Connections is an awards programme aimed at connecting community groups in the UK to the internet. Since its launch in January 2001, £2 million worth of internet-ready PCs and contributions towards subscriptions have been awarded. More than

3,400 winners have benefited, from inner-city farms to disabled dance groups.

Also see how BT is involved with children to help promote digital inclusion in the case studies at the end of this document.

Case studies

Online access to mountain rescue information

A Scottish mountain rescue team is one of more than 1,000 voluntary organisations that have taken up our offer with web-builder ik.com to make free, easy-to-build websites for UK charities and community groups.

"We had been considering creating a website for a good couple of years but no-one had the time or expertise to do it," says Stuart Ballantyne, secretary of the Trossachs Search and Rescue Team in Scotland. *"Thanks to BT and ik.com we now have our own website and although it's in its infancy we are receiving positive feedback from other organisations and the public. We found creating the site very easy and editing is simple too – ideal for voluntary groups such as us."*

Children teach their grandparents how to surf the net

The Grandparents to School event held at St Stephen Churchtown primary school Cornwall, UK in February 2004 attracted 100 grandparents to learn about computers and the internet. All classes in the school had a half-hour slot in the IT suite with their grandparents and many of the children proved to be experts at helping their relatives surf the net.

"Our feet didn't touch the ground until the grandparents and grandchildren stopped for lunch," said Ann Tomkins, a project officer with EverybodyOnline, a project run by UK charity Citizens Online with the support of BT. Working with local governments and service providers, the project aims to ensure that those people disadvantaged by location, skills or economic factors do not miss out on the benefits of new technology.



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Children help promote digital inclusion

A new BT-sponsored child-friendly website, called Internet Rangers, is part of a campaign launched in 2004 to help young people get their families online. For further information, please visit: www.internetrangers.co.uk.

Our research found that children – particularly young teenagers – are the most effective spur to encourage reluctant parents or grandparents onto the internet. Nearly a third of parents and grandparents – 32% – have been taught or encouraged to surf the internet by a child aged between 13 and 16 years.

It's not just teenagers who are helping to bridge the digital divide – nearly one in five parents and grandparents have either learned a new skill or been educated via the web following online help from a child aged between five and eight.

Sophie (11) and Chloe Davies (9), from Neath in South Wales, have been budding Internet Rangers since Christmas 2000 when they got their first computer. The girls use the internet mainly for homework and emailing friends, but last year persuaded their grandmother, Pat (70), to try using the internet.

Sophie says: *"Grandma needed quite a lot of persuading as she didn't think she'd be able to use the internet. She also said that there wasn't anything she'd want to see on the net but Chloe and I found a site with lots of pictures of Neath in the old days and one on how to be a gardener. I think we helped change her mind."*

After a few lessons with the girls, Pat enrolled on a computer class at her local community centre.

Pat says: *"I had the opportunity of doing a number of different classes but the girls had already shown me the basics of how to use the computer so I decided to give it a try. Once I got over the fear factor and put the idea of being too old to learn out of my mind I was fine. The course was really interesting and of course I had Sophie and Chloe on hand to help me with the homework! I now have my own PC and have just started another course – this time in desktop publishing."*

Keeping young people off the streets

Young people in Audley & Bignall End, UK, complained that they had nowhere interesting to go to keep them off the streets. This is why Youth4Audley was set up in 2003 and immediately developed a project using art, media and information technology. Showing extreme resourcefulness a venue was found, personal computer applied for (and gained from BT) and funding found from a charity and local government. Working with Everybodyonline (supported by BT) and others, the young people met with many of the elderly residents to find out what the area had been like in their youth. They then built up a digital library of stories and photos, past and present.

In March 2004 Youth4Audley presented a multi-media show celebrating Audley and its people and bringing together old and young in the communities.

Bullying Online wins award

A comprehensive online information service for anyone affected by bullying, called Bullying Online, won the digital inclusion category in the 2003 EWell-Being Awards, sponsored by BT.

Bullying Online is a registered charity helping parents and pupils deal with school bullying. In four years 325,000 people have visited the site and the volunteer team has responded to more than 16,000 emails, some from confused teenagers desperate for some reassurance and others from anxious parents searching out advice.

There is guidance on every aspect of bullying, from racial abuse to text harassment on a mobile phone, letters for parents to copy out if they are unsure of how to approach their child's school, help for bullies and their parents, and tips from children who have overcome bullying.

Giving community groups the opportunity to acquire new ICT skills

BT supports Everybodyonline's initiative to organise taster sessions for people with no experience of computers, to give them a chance to explore the opportunities provided by information and communication technology.

Margaret Temple is one of 41 residents aged between 60 and 90 at the Welbeck Green Bungalows housing complex, near Newcastle on Tyne, UK. The residents have been regularly visited by an Everybodyonline project officer since May 2003 and provided with internet access from laptop computers and mobile telephones. Margaret has learned how to use Microsoft Word, send emails and search the internet for information.

Margaret is a lay preacher and previously used a typewriter to produce her sermons. She is planning to buy a laptop computer and printer. She has also decided to take more training to further improve her IT skills.



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