

Network reliability: the true benchmark of a successful internet infrastructure

Chris Stening, Managing Director, Easynet Connect

<http://www.easynetconnect.net/>

Ever since the Digital Britain report was launched last year, the issue of high-speed internet access for all has been the hottest technology topic on the political agenda. The next hurdle is the debate between universality vs. speed, between moderate access for all vs. high-speed access for most. However, if we look a little more closely, the answer is that really we need both. If that sounds a bit idealistic then it is important to consider that the real driver in this area is how businesses use the internet and how reliant there are on it.

Focusing on universality

Universality critically overlooks the difference between consumer and business demand. Consumers use their broadband connections for activities such as shopping, watching on-demand video or using social media. Most of these services can be accessed with relatively low-bandwidth asymmetric connections (such as ADSL). Business users on the other hand, with their shared internet connections, online collaboration software, cloud computing, file sharing, video conferencing and much more, require not only greater bandwidth but also a symmetrical service that is scalable, as well as reliable (e.g. [SDSL](#) or [fibre](#)).

Focusing on speed

As businesses discover more internet-enabled services, their bandwidth demands inevitably rise. Businesses will always want and use more speed – that is a constant. What is always growing however is their reliance on the internet in line with technological advances. Take cloud computing for example: we know that by the end of this year, half of UK SMEs will be using the cloud.¹ In order to support these services, the reliability of their connection, and not its speed, will be their number one priority.

The internet's real priority: Building Britain

Internet access is not a dichotomy between moderate access for all vs. high-speed access for most. Instead, it is about the internet *continuing to drive UK business*. For this, network reliability is key and in April this year, 81% of SMEs told us they could not survive for longer than a day without internet access².

By just focusing on universality and speed, we are looking at the cause, and not the effect of a successful internet infrastructure. If internet access is to be judged and measured by just one factor, it should be in its ongoing ability to keep Britain moving.

¹ Easynet Connect, Could 2010 be the year SMEs fully embrace cloud computing?

<http://www.easynetconnect.net/industry-insight/whitepapers-and-reports/cloud-computing-2010.aspx>

² Are UK SMEs gearing up for growth?

<http://www.easynetconnect.net/industry-insight/whitepapers-and-reports/gearing-up-for-growth.aspx>