

In case you aren't following the forums I am sending you what I have been writing on them. I have tried to stay upbeat and not critical. I have tried to show the case for lighting or at least giving access to fibre for rural people.

Broadband is a utility now. The final report should look to the End Game, which is fibre to every property in the country, or at the least FiWi in the interim years.

There are thousands or possibly millions of people who will never get a decent level of connection without government intervention as the incumbent is quite happy milking the obsolete copper network. Please think out of the box and listen to the people, not to the advisers who have a vested interest in holding back innovation. The 21CN network is only a patch up job. Look to the future.

thanks

http://wiki.writetoreply.org/wiki/The_Fake_Digital_Britain_Report

<http://www.digitalbritainforum.org.uk/2009/02/have-your-say-on-digital-britain/#comments>

<http://writetoreply.org/digitalbritain/>

Comments by

cyberdoyle

“What is absurd when you think about it is that to provide a USO that has Committed Information Rate (that CIR again) that is required to assure end to end quality of service, then each exchange and mobile mast will require massive fibre backhaul.... so why not go the whole hog and continue that fibre to every content consumer?” that is a valid quote from a far seeing person, I just thought I would post it here cos he hasn't time to do it

[Reply »](#)

March 11, 2009 7:33 pm

that is what I mean about you being in the box, I know FTTH is a different project, its called the EndGame, and it is the only way to build for the future of this country. Why patch up the old fleet ad infinitum when we can build new ones for a fraction of the cost? You obviously have a much better grasp of explaining and understanding things than most, look into fibre more. I don't really care that yours or my aging parents would be happy with a 2 meg that works, the next generation won't thank us for it. Swathes of the countryside won't have one that works with the USO that is proposed, and what about the innovators? they are unhappy already, how can they plan flights if their engines fall off mid air? How can they sail to faraway ports in leaky ships?

The old copper has done a great job, now it is time to build anew. Get the fibre to the people and just watch what they do with it. We can't even guess. We aren't the next gen users, but it is our job to try to plan for them now, otherwise all this is to go through again and again. The copper network can not support NGA. The s/n issue will never be addressed, because unlike me and you not many people know what it is.

BT will inform govt that everyone has a 2 meg connection and govt will believe them, just like they believe the marconi database which states virtually 100% can get some form of broadband. Well I know lots who can't so someone is telling porkies. A 2 meg connection shared between 70 people at the mercy of an ISP is

not and never will be broadband fit for purpose. There is no point in replacing copper cables everywhere to cut down the s/n ratio, it is like sticking elastoplast on a jet - waste of time and money. The time for patches is over. But it is scary out of the box when govt and telcos would rather you stayed inside it with the lid shut. Someone like you with your analytical skills would be very welcome this side of the virtual digital divide.

[Reply »](#)

March 11, 2009 5:59 pm

Section 4.1 - Universal connectivity: Networks, paragraph 30

I disagree with those figures, when ADSL2+ is enabled the distance from the exchange to receive a good service shortens, therefore won't more be finding no service at all?

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Posted March 11, 2009 2:50 pm

Section 4.1 - Universal connectivity: Networks, paragraph 24

Consumers want and expect to get what they get at work, at school, at university. They want the same as other people for the same price. They will still want this in 2012.

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Posted March 11, 2009 2:47 pm

Section 4.1 - Universal connectivity: Networks, paragraph 25

hi Mike, just read your report on the USO, I found it very informative, but you are still thinking in the box and trying to shoehorn your quite logical ideas into an obsolete infrastructure. Your idea that it will cost quarter of a billion a year to prop up rural areas and deprived users is probably accurate, but why not put the money into providing a decent connection for them rather than a 2Mbit one? I can't see the logic in keep patching up what we have at great expense when a fibre solution would fix it for future generations. I totally agree that speed is not the issue, but only fibre will give enough capacity to cope, nobody will have much speed at all soon if we don't light the fibre. At least fibre in the rural areas will encourage ISPs to get fibre lit to them and bridge the divide.

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Posted March 11, 2009 2:46 pm

Section 4.1 - Universal connectivity: Networks, paragraph 4

Can't agree with you there Albert sorry, 2 Mb will still transport the same in 5 years, and we will be needing 100 Mb by then. 2 Mb was fine for us 5 years ago. It is not enough now unless every user had a dedicated 2 Mb each (ie leased line). 5 years ago websites had compressed graphics or no graphics. Now they have flash animations and videos. In 5 more years who knows what they will have? If 2 meg is groaning now, it will have died a death by then. I do admire your optimism though, well done.

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Posted March 11, 2009 2:32 pm

Section 4.1 - Universal connectivity: Networks, paragraph 25

Mike - what you are saying is a variation of the “only as strong as weakest link” truism

The definition of NGA - The eNdGAmE is reached when connectivity is just another boring utility like water/gas/electricity.

At home that means 100Mbps minimum FttH, combined with gigE mid mile transit and 10gigE+ IP Peering (according to the experts I talk to) and that is MHO too...(my humble opinion)

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Posted March 10, 2009 5:50 pm

Section 5.1 - Education and Skills, paragraph 15

Tony - the call for funds closed on 4th March, not that any rural communities would have access to them or urban communities for that matter. There is no provision for community learning that I could ever find. I set up our own classes in the community and taught them for free, that was the only way to help the people about here. We are too far from any learning establishment. We now have a club in the village hall and several people help out and share their knowledge, again this is all done by volunteers. The powers that be can only provide help for certain groups, and nobody fulfills that criteria. ie when i was trying to get help for silver surfers, the only help i could get was if I paid to be trained, wasting valuable time and money in the process so that I could then charge everyone to have a lesson. Easier just to train them for free. The only lessons available for farmers was if they were employed, were under 25 and had no qualifications. They were then eligible to have a free nvq2 course that would teach them lots of stuff they didn't want to know but would tick lots of boxes for the college. My fellow farmers are usually 40 -50+ and don't fit into any category. It would help if someone dishing out the funding took the trouble to find out what it was people wanted to learn. You can lead an orse to water but you can't make it drink. It has to be thirsty. I do appreciate you finding the links though, many thanks for trying!

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Posted March 9, 2009 6:20 pm

Section 4.1 - Universal connectivity: Networks, paragraph 4

The only viable solution is fibre. Yesterday I held a mile of fibre in my hand. <http://picasaweb.google.com/okjfdi/AMileOfFibre#>

I put it down on the map and took a photo. It comes on a bobbin, like a sewing thread. You lay the orange ducting (also in the photo) in the ground or in the air and blow the fibre through. That is all it takes, no expensive copper, just cheap optic fibre. It is no longer rocket science, this is a cost effective solution and it should be made available to all. Only government intervention will make the incumbent provide a futureproof infrastructure. If they JFDI now then UKplc will thank them with votes as it will be Something Useful they have done. They would

go down in history books as the people who Saw the Light.
As opposed to the people who kept us in the dark (which is what will happen if left to Ofcom and BT men in suits)
Light the fibre. ah go on.

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Posted March 9, 2009 7:54 am

Section 4.1 - Universal connectivity: Networks, paragraph 4

Two Wiltshire villages posting here, but their story is mirrored throughout the country. These villages will never be economic for the telcos to service when they can make millions for the same investment in urban areas. The case for government intervention to run fibre to these areas first has never been more pronounced. You can't blame the telcos for wanting to make profits, it's their job, but the fact that they sweep us all under the carpet and tell govt that we have connections is very misleading. We have a drip out of a tap, and we need a fat pipe. I wish more rural people would speak up, but they haven't a good enough connection to spend time posting comments, they are too fraught trying to finish their online banking or defra forms before they get a timeout.

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Posted March 7, 2009 10:11 am

Section 5.1 - Education and Skills, paragraph 15

Gillian, what you say is so true, we are finding that many people running their own business lack basic ICT skills, one chap who was a big bug in the town hall called in the other day to ask how you make a new line when you are writing a letter, answer - press enter- reply, which is the enter button?

A business which had to respond to an emailed word document lacked the skills to save the doc and update and return it to the sender. So it goes on. Why don't these people join computer classes? Because they don't have the time, they don't always deliver what they need, and they cost money. That is why local user generated content could deliver the lessons (which would be interactive) at a reasonable time to suit the business over a broadband connection. These would be a cost effective way to improve the ICT skills of many businesses, mainly rural ones who can't spare the time in business hours to drive into town where the classes are held .

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Posted March 6, 2009 7:15 pm

Section 4.1 - Universal connectivity: Networks, paragraph 4

We are 147 houses in the village and a further 100 scattered around in roughly a 2 mile radius, farms and hamlets. We can't reach them all... some have no access at all. They crawl on mobile broadband that takes 47 hours to download open office, so they bring their laptops to the online centre in the village to access broadband. (adding to their carbon footprint).

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Posted March 5, 2009 11:06 pm

Section 4.1 - Universal connectivity: Networks, paragraph 4

Hi Albert, great comment, and sure a good 2Mb feed at the moment will certainly

mean your community will thrive, but look to the future, and 2Mb is starting to feel like dialup to people who have had it for a while, truly the only way to go is to campaign with your whole heart to get fibre to your village. The towns and cities will soon be getting it, cos they are economic, we in the sticks won't get it unless the people writing the final digital brit report realise this. Don't settle for a drip, lets get full mains supply out to the rural areas asap. Broadband is such a fantastic lifeline to our communities, it is worth the effort. Otherwise all that will be on offer for you and me is mobile or satellite... they will write that into the USO and then we are stuffed.

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Posted March 5, 2009 6:15 pm

Section 2.1 - Next Generation Access Networks, paragraph 13

The market will fail to deliver NGA. They are quite happy with the returns the current broadband gives them from the copper. The only investment they will make is to put money into 'upgrades' which are simply patches. The remedy is FttH.

end of story.

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Posted March 5, 2009 1:13 pm

Section 2.1 - Next Generation Access Networks, paragraph 10

Sitting still and talking makes no person great. The Good Lord provides the Fishes, but you must Dig the Bait. Instead of frameworks why not just do it? Nobody set out a framework for twitter, or youtube or facebook. light the fibre and the people will deliver innovation.

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Posted March 5, 2009 1:10 pm

Section 2.1 - Next Generation Access Networks, paragraph 8

Agree with Mike, the government needs to assist rural areas with fibre, we have to be within 25km of a POP to get access, and not many of us are. (Point of Presence)

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Posted March 5, 2009 1:07 pm

Section 2.1 - Next Generation Access Networks, paragraph 7

A: Yes there is a role for Government to play in NGA infrastructure, it should regulate that telco profits be used to build the fibre out and light it instead of paying shareholders and fat cat salaries. BT should be made to take on the unemployed and save government paying dole out, and dig trenches and lay fibre to every home.

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Posted March 5, 2009 1:03 pm

Section 2.1 - Next Generation Access Networks, paragraph 6

A: no it won't, it will continue to milk an obsolete copper network

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Posted March 5, 2009 1:01 pm

Section 2.1 - Next Generation Access Networks, paragraph 5

A: yes it is

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Posted March 5, 2009 1:01 pm

Section 2.2 - Mobile Wireless Networks, paragraph 2

Re para 2 section 2.2

and the same applies to broadband, look at the mobile phone phenomenon and realise what could be achieved if a truly unlimited connection was available to all. You didn't plan for virtually ever person to own a mobile phone, you have no idea what will happen if fibre is available to everyone, it will innovate and inspire people from every background if it is ubiquitous and affordable.

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Posted March 5, 2009 12:58 pm

Section 2.2 - Mobile Wireless Networks, paragraph 22

add another £6Bn to the money raised in the auctioned spectrum in 2000 and you have enough to run fibre to every home in the country and do the job properly for many years to come.

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Posted March 5, 2009 12:54 pm

Section 5.1 - Education and Skills, paragraph 15

All the children in our area have access to computers at their schools - which is great, we are a rural area but CLEO (Cumbria Lancashire Education Online) has made sure we are not out of the race. Our problem is that when the children leave school/college/uni they have no access at home. This leads us back to the USO, and a 2Mbit connection is not a lot of use with the contention ratios for children to download homework and do research at home. Therefore they won't be able to fully engage in their education in the same way as their urban counterparts will.

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Posted March 5, 2009 12:22 pm

Digital Britain: The Interim Report, paragraph 14

"Delivering Digital Britain will depend upon a smart industry, working with a committed Government to produce lasting solutions."

You Said It.

Cut out the middle bit and go straight to FttH which will deliver a Digital Britain to be proud of.

You CANDO it if you really want. JFDI.

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Posted March 5, 2009 9:54 am

Digital Britain: The Interim Report, paragraph 6

When building a knowledge economy, expansion will happen if the infrastructure to transport it is available. The sooner FttH is implemented the sooner innovation will mushroom and this country will continue to lead the way in content creation. Limit the people to an obsolete copper network and the creative industries will eventually shrivel and die as new innovators will not be born and those that exist

will relocate.

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Posted March 5, 2009 9:35 am

Section 4.1 - Universal connectivity: Networks, paragraph 48

Just got a quote for a 100 Mbit line into our community network, this would give 100 users a dedicated 1 Mbit feed. £76,000.00 which equals £63.33 a month per user. 200 users at 512Kb would pay £31.70 a month each. That is what it costs to do a DIY solution, on top of which is the connection to each home via a wireless network. As you can see, it is huge undertaking to try to get a decent connection through the current infrastructure to our rural area where BT won't service. A gigabit or bust is our long term goal...

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Posted March 4, 2009 9:40 pm

Digital Britain: The Interim Report, whole page

you have to look at the bright side Meek, at least people have a chance to reply, and hopefully someone in authority will read the replies and listen to the people. Perhaps they will light the fibre to our towns as well as our cities, and then it will reach the villages and hamlets, and before we know it there will be universal access, just like electricity and water. If we don't speak up in the right places then your take on it will be true, we will be neglected. We have to make our voices heard, the little people want what the big people have, which is the utility known as broadband. We expect to pay a fair price, but realise we may need government help to get access to infrastructure that the incumbent hasn't maintained for many years. Fibre is all over the place, unlit, unwanted. It needs lighting and using for the benefit of all.

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Posted March 3, 2009 9:25 pm

Section 4.1 - Universal connectivity: Networks, paragraph 48

I think we direct them here Mike...

my proposal is that instead of bailing out the banks and other things they put money into something that will provide a return on investment, and broadband will do that if it is good enough. 21cn is a stopgap, what is needed is FTTH. Fibre to every home, everywhere. That will bring the economy back up, this is a service country, we lead the world in so many ICT applications, we need an infrastructure to cope with growth, not to stifle it. Who should contribute? The fat cat telcos. The Government. Europe. The unemployed. The customers. A fiver from every home on top of what people now pay for a connection would do it, and would save paying £30 to sky LOL.

The future is fibre. Mobile is for traveling with.

Satellite is for massive countries or vast mountains. C'mon baby light my fibre (as a famous broadband expert once threatened to sing at a conference).

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Posted March 3, 2009 9:17 pm

Section 4.1 - Universal connectivity: Networks, paragraph 49

Ok, well I am happy to be content with a 2Mbit connection as long as that is what is supplied to the houses of parliament, and with the same contention ratio that

our rural business has. If however the houses of parliament reckon they need more than that to run their business, then that should apply for all. Four legs good, two legs bad. Walk the talk gentlemen, light the fibre. You know it makes sense.

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Posted March 3, 2009 9:04 pm

Section 4.1 - Universal connectivity: Networks, paragraph 25

What the USO of 2Mbps won't be able to do is deliver "The public services, such as education or remote health, for which delivery depends on a certain speed;" when the other users on the line are watching lplayer, you tube, listen again or other digital content. At peak times the lines around here are inaccessible due to demand. Broadband is so great everyone who has a decent connection is using it, and those with borderline connections drop off causing immense frustration. That is NOW. I dread to think what it will be like in 2012. The USO should be 100meg to enable the usage to grow, not to stagnate. It will cost less to run fibre to rural areas than copper. Then public services will be accessible for all.

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Posted March 3, 2009 8:55 pm

Section 4.1 - Universal connectivity: Networks, paragraph 14

If the government wants to promote the adoption of e-public services then broadband has to become easier to get. In rural areas especially it can take months of work (and paying) for a service that cannot be delivered. The BT checker data is inaccurate and quite often states a line is capable of getting broadband when it isn't. People end up disheartened and spread doom and gloom. People who do get a service find it is inadequate for the job and constant disconnections put them off doing much with it. All they need is a decent connection to a decent service and you will soon see them adopting anything that makes their lives better, easier or richer, which is what a good broadband connection truly does. If you build the houses the people will come. You wouldn't need to drive the promotion, if it was good it would drive itself.

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Posted March 3, 2009 8:28 pm

Section 4.1 - Universal connectivity: Networks, paragraph 9

quote: 'This will be particularly relevant to those on lower incomes, older people or those remote from the physical distribution points for public service and other currently excluded communities and groups.'

- regarding take up, the quote above clearly shows that government is aware that these people need support, because with current pricing for fibre from BT there is no way they will ever get access at a price they can afford. No ISP can afford to deliver it unless the infrastructure is put in by the incumbent. BT won't do it as it is not profitable. It makes a lot of sense as previous commenters have noted to put government intervention into rural or remote areas where the people can make the most use of online service - even applying online for my car licence last week reduced my carbon footprint as it is quite a trip to my nearest post office. These services are so brilliant, it is such a shame people can't access them in remote areas.

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Posted March 3, 2009 8:20 pm

Section 4.1 - Universal connectivity: Networks, paragraph 5

Broadband is already an essential commodity, but recently it has got slower as content grows larger, and infrastructure has not kept up with the growth in online applications. This gap will only widen as more people develop new uses for the internet and UKplc will be left behind if the fibre isn't lit soon. The 'e-Inclusion' ministerial conference mentioned 'gaps' but they are more like black holes already, where access to the internet is severely restricted or even absent in many areas of the country. Just because there are fat pipes in cities it doesn't mean everyone has access to them, many just have a drip from a leaky tap.
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Posted March 3, 2009 8:11 pm

Section 2.1 - Next Generation Access Networks, paragraph 28

We have noticed the signs of congestion since the inception of sites such as youtube, facebook and lplayer. All the websites are getting larger graphics and flash players etc. Just surfing has demanded more bandwidth/backhaul than it did last year. People are uploading videos and images much more now. The networks are creaking in this rural area. Different people in our community on different ISPs all say the same, 'when the kids get home kiss goodbye to your internet access'. We are a rural area and chances are there is no telco out there rushing to help us get a better feed. Broadband has brought so much to us, it is pretty gutting to lose it for long periods now.
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Posted March 2, 2009 4:05 pm

Section 2.1 - Next Generation Access Networks, paragraph 17

IMHO more help should be given to the small companies trying to deliver NGB, as their innovative approaches will be what connects rural communities, as the larger companies will naturally concentrate on areas of dense population to get the profits. It is the small bespoke organisations who will help the hamlets and farms, villages and small towns. Government should support them where possible.

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Posted March 2, 2009 3:57 pm

Section 4.1 - Universal connectivity: Networks, paragraph 42

I agree with the comments by Andrew, 2meg is way too low, especially if in rural areas it is to be delivered by mobile or satellite, and is not a good or fair USO. It will cost as much to deliver by obsolete methods as it will to deliver by fibre. Think out of the box, get the fibre lit. Rural areas may need subsidy but the urban profits should easily pay for it. Govt should ensure the plumbing is put in and encourage everyone to strive to achieve the end game, not pour more money into supporting an obsolete copper network that can't deliver what the people will need by 2012. Satellite and mobile are great, but they can't replace a proper fibre infrastructure which would make the UK a world leader instead of a slumdog in the broadband world.

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Posted February 26, 2009 10:27 am

Digital Britain: The Interim Report, whole page

In defense of the report (which I actually have read all the way through, several times) I think that Lord Carter has had a difficult and complex job on to get it right, and now with the responses they might stand a chance of doing a better final report. Not many people in power who have the final say have a true perception of broadband, or computers for that matter. They have secretaries. The secretaries do all the things that need doing. If any of the writers of this report lived out in the countryside, on a minimum wage, with children, elderly parents and defra to deal with they would know a bit more about how vital ICT is in this day and age and would have no need for such reports, they would have taken steps to lay fibre to the home by now instead of just talking and writing about it.

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Posted February 26, 2009 8:08 am

Section 2.1 - Next Generation Access Networks, paragraph 54

I agree with Richard, apart from Yorkshire Forward the majority of RDAs have no interest or understanding of NGA as it applies to rural areas. They seem to think mobile will fill the gap, though how a mobile connection can supply 10 computer in a rural business or 6 computers in a family home at a reasonable rate or price is beyond me. Fibre to the home is the only sensible economic aid to rural areas to deliver NGA.

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Posted February 26, 2009 8:00 am