

Have you got the right connection for your business? Your network connectivity options explained

It's easy to take data networking for granted but every IT investment you make has to earn its keep. With the volume of digital business data more than doubling every 2 years, according to IDC, businesses are becoming increasingly reliant on information flows and being connected - to other sites, to the internet, to cloud hosted services - at all times. So how can you be sure your connectivity is optimised for you?

Data connectivity is generally based on three kinds of technology: copper, wireless or fibre. Each option can determine how fast and reliable your connection will be. Let's look at your choices.

Copper technologies

ADSL: an entry-level product, ADSL2+ offers download speeds up to 24 Mb. But the upload and download speeds aren't the same - they're what we call Asymmetric - so ADSL isn't ideal if you communicate with hosted applications or are sending files to other office locations. Bandwidth isn't guaranteed as ADSL is distance-dependent - the farther you are from your local phone exchange, the slower the speeds you'll get. What's more, your bandwidth is shared so your speeds suffer during busy periods

Fibre to the cabinet (FTTC):

With FTTC, you get fibre from the exchange to the street cabinet and the 'last mile' to your premises is copper. It's one step up from ADSL, offering cost-effective bandwidth up to 80Mb download and 20Mb upload. But like ADSL, the upload and download speeds aren't the same. Whilst inherently a contended technology, meaning your bandwidth is shared, FTTC can be offered as an Ethernet-based solution with fully uncontended bandwidth.

FTTC can be a good, relatively reliable, option for smaller office and branch locations but not for a head office to which other branch sites need to connect. It is also a good choice if you are looking for back-up and resilience to a fibre connection.

Ethernet in the first mile (EFM):

Here, you're connecting your premises directly to your local exchange with multiple pairs of copper. Although speeds are lower than FTTC, with 2Mb to 20Mb available, the bandwidth is dedicated and is available both ways. If you don't want to share your bandwidth and you want guarantees over the availability and quality of service, EFM is a step closer to fibre.



Data Connectivity

Wireless access

Licensed wireless services are delivered over radio spectrum that's licensed with OFCOM. Offering quality guarantees and symmetric speeds ranging from 10 Mbps to 1Gbps, wireless is a good option for hard-to-reach locations, or as a backup link for resilience and peace of mind. The supplier must verify your premises has line of sight to nearby microwave equipment.

Fibre access

Fibre access uses fibre-optic light cables to transmit your data at phenomenal speeds. A fibre connection creates virtually limitless bandwidth capacity into your organisation – capacity is only limited by the termination equipment, not the connection. This makes it the most future-proof option of all.

Fibre is ideal for connecting business-critical locations or for providing super-fast Internet access. Your connection isn't shared with anyone else and with quality guarantees and a managed services capability, fibre access also offers maximum security and business assurance.

Ultimately, a data connection is about ensuring your business can operate at optimum levels at all times and is primed for growth. That's why choosing your data connection isn't just about top-line bandwidth speeds but, more importantly, ensuring that your connection is dedicated to you, is two-way, secure and assured to enterprise levels. Outside of small office & home office sites, fibre is the future and - with costs coming down - is more accessible than ever.



Want to know more?

For more information please:

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