

THE BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO

broadband **wireless** INTERNET



Wireless Networks



Computer Security



Instant Messaging



Downloading Music



PC Phone Calls



Wi-Fi and Laptops



PETER BURNS

THE BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO BROADBAND AND WIRELESS INTERNET

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Introduction

Broadband has made the Internet a much more exciting place to visit and revolutionised what your computer can do for you.

This book uses uncomplicated language to help you get the most out of your connection. Each chapter is divided into sections that contain vital information about each topic as well as expert tips and website recommendations to help you along the way. Learn how to protect your computer, keep in touch with instant messaging and PC phone calls, and surf the web without wires both at home and on the move. A Jargon Buster is included at the back of the book to explain any unfamiliar terms.

Chapter One: Choosing Broadband

Section 1: Broadband Explained

Essential Information

Going online used to be about connecting your computer to your home telephone and dialling in to surf the web. This is known as dial-up Internet access and although it will get you online, it's slow. There are lots of new and exciting websites and services you can't use with a dial-up connection unless you're prepared to wait and wait and wait.

Broadband allows you to surf the web at high speed. It still uses your telephone line (or cable service), but squeezes a lot more information down it at much faster speeds, opening up new ways to communicate and be entertained.

Section 2: Benefits of Broadband

Cost

With dial-up Internet you pay as you go. You can also buy Pay As You Go broadband but more usually it involves a monthly fee. It still works out less expensive so if you

spend over eight hours a month during peak times on the Internet, you would be better off with broadband.

Talk and Surf

All broadband services allow you to surf the web and chat on your home phone at the same time.

Always On

With dial-up Internet access, switching on your computer and dialling is a hassle. With broadband, your connection is always switched on so you can get online instantly

Communicate

Broadband opens up new and free opportunities to keep in touch with your friends and family.

Music and Video

Broadband is perfect if you love music or films. Millions of music tracks are at your fingertips and broadband makes watching TV and video online a reality.

Online Gaming

Broadband allows you to connect to game players worldwide using your computer or games console. Why play against the computer when you can play against real people?

Wireless Networks

More and more people have several computers in the home. One in the office, one for the kids, even one in

the kitchen. Broadband lets you hook them all together without the need for all those wires.

Security

Keeping your computer safe from hackers and viruses is vitally important. Broadband allows you to download regular updates to your computer so it's always safe from prying eyes.

Section 3: How to Get Broadband

There are four simple steps you need to take before you sign up to a broadband service.

1. Find out what type of broadband service you can receive.
2. Check out the main broadband providers.
3. Understand what equipment you'll need.
4. Learn what to look for before you buy.

Section 4: Types of Broadband

Fig. 1 shows that there are three different types of broadband. It's important to decide which is right for you. A lot will depend on which service is available where you live. For most people this is ADSL.

ADSL

What is it?	ADSL stands for Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Line. It means that you can use your existing home telephone to get connected to broadband.
What's the benefit?	In the UK it's widely available to a majority of homes. When you order ADSL you get all the kit and software you need in the post and you install it yourself.
Any disadvantages?	You might be unlucky enough to live in a rural area that doesn't offer ADSL. And if you live a long way from your nearest broadband telephone exchange, you may only be able to get a restricted speed of service. ADSL also uses the same telephone line in your street. If many people in your street have ADSL and are online at the same time, performance can be affected.

CABLE

What is it?	This brings broadband into your home via your TV cable service. The cable company runs a wire from your street straight into the back of your computer.
What's the benefit?	It's just like ADSL but you'll find faster services on cable. Cable can be a great deal if you already have cable TV or bundle it with a cable telephone package.
Any disadvantages?	Cable isn't widely available. In the UK it covers less than 50% of homes. If you don't like the idea of running cables around your house it's not ideal. Like ADSL, you can also suffer speed restrictions if everyone in your street is using it at the same time.

SATELLITE

What is it?	Broadband using a satellite dish attached to your home or garden.
What's the benefit?	Really only for people in isolated areas who cannot get ADSL or cable.
Any disadvantages?	It's more expensive, incurs high set-up charges and only offers slower broadband speeds. Satellite is limited to being up to 10 times faster than dial-up Internet and if you want to upload information to the Internet rather than download, it's slow – only 5 times as fast. Poor weather can also interrupt the connection.

Fig. 1

Section 5: Which Broadband Service Can You Receive?

Essential Information

To find out which service you can receive, you need to do the following:

Action 1

In the UK go online and visit bt.com/broadband. Enter your BT phone number or postcode (if you don't have a BT phone line) to see if you can get ADSL and what speed of service is available to you (Fig. 2).

BT wholesale

HOME AVAILABILITY SUPPLIERS TECHNOLOGY BENEFITS FAQs NEWS EXPLORE

WHAT IS BROADBAND? >
GETTING BROADBAND >
BROADBAND IN ACTION >

WELCOME TO BROADBAND

INTERESTED IN HIGH-SPEED INTERNET ACCESS THAT DOESN'T TIE UP YOUR PHONE LINE AT A FIXED MONTHLY PRICE?

Or maybe you want to learn what broadband can do for you and your family? Or how it can help make your business more efficient and productive?

FIND OUT ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW:

Find out more about broadband and the difference it can make in the home and for work >

Confirm you can already get broadband; more than 95 per cent of homes and businesses can >

If you want to get broadband now, check our directory of UK service providers >

Need some answers? See our Frequently Asked Questions >

Get the latest news on broadband whenever you want it >

Life's more relaxed with broadband - why not squeeze in a little fun? >

99%
OF ALL UK HOMES AND BUSINESSES CAN ALREADY GET BROADBAND. CAN YOU?

CAN I GET BROADBAND?
CAN YOU GET ADSL BROADBAND? ENTER YOUR BT PHONE NUMBER HERE TO FIND OUT

GO

If you don't have a BT phone, you can check by address or postcode.

CAN YOU GET SYMMETRIC DSL SERVICES AT YOUR HOME OR OFFICE? ENTER YOUR FULL ADDRESS IN THE DSL CHECKER

EXPLORE BROADBAND

FIND OUT HOW BROADBAND WORKS >

PLAY PIPESKATER - THE NEED FOR SPEED >

WELCOME TO YOUR BROADBAND WORLD >

Fig. 2

Action 2

Visit the main cable broadband providers at telewest.co.uk and ntl.com. Enter your postcode to see if you can get their service.

Action 3

If you are unable to receive either ADSL or cable you probably live in a rural or remote location. You should therefore consider a satellite service.

Most people will only have one option but if you have a choice, choose cable – it gives you faster speeds and can be bundled with other phone and digital TV packages.

Section 6: Finding a Broadband Provider

Visit the websites in Fig. 3 (using a Pay As You Go dial-up account if your computer isn't yet connected to the Internet) to see the latest offers and deals from the most popular UK broadband providers. For details of broadband providers in other countries, visit broadband.thelist.com.

Type of Broadband	Provider
ADSL	AOL : aol.co.uk/broadband BT Yahoo! : btyahoo.com Demon : www.demon.net Madasafish : madasafish.com OneTel : onetel.co.uk Tiscali : tiscali.co.uk/broadband UK Online : ukonline.co.uk Virgin : virgin.net/internetaccess Wanadoo : wanadoo.co.uk

Cable	NTL : ntl.com Telewest : blueyonder.co.uk
Satellite	AVC : avcbroadband.com Central Point : www.cpsat.co.uk skyDSL : teles-skydsl.co.uk

Fig. 3

Section 7: What to Look Out For

Essential Information

Buying broadband for the first time or switching to a new service can be a little confusing. There are lots of companies offering different speeds and deals which makes it hard to get straightforward advice. Look out for these four things before you sign up.

Speed

Broadband comes in different speeds, which is measured in megabits per second (or Mb for short). Services of 2 Mb are common but in certain areas or with cable services, you can get 8 Mb or more. But how fast do you really need to go? For occasional use, a speed of 1 Mb or 2 Mb is the most you're likely to need. If you want to download lots of music and photos, or watch online videos, 2 Mb or higher would be preferable. Even faster services don't actually make using the Internet any quicker, they are of most benefit if you will be downloading lots of music and files from the Internet. Fig. 4 shows you how quick each service is.

How long does it take to download a...	Normal dial-up	1Mb Broadband	2Mb Broadband	8Mb Broadband
Standard web page.	15 secs	¼ sec	½ sec	½ sec
1MB digital photo from your e-mail.	3 mins	8 secs	4 secs	1 sec
3MB music track from a website.	9 mins	30 secs	15 secs	4 secs
600MB movie	30 hours	100 mins	50 mins	12 mins

Fig. 4

EXPERT TIP

Megabit (Mb) refers to the speed at which information flows from the Internet down your phone or cable line into your computer. Don't get megabit confused with megabyte (or MB for short). A megabyte refers to the size of a file not the speed. For example a digital photo might be 1 MB in size and a typical music track could be 3 MB. Gigabyte (or GB) is a very large file size and is equivalent to 1,000 MB.

Usage Restrictions

There are three further types of broadband package you can buy: unlimited, restricted or Pay As You Go. Unlimited lets you surf the web and download as much as you want but it costs more per month to buy. Restricted services put a cap on what you download, measured in gigabytes or by the number of hours you're online.

Restricted services offer great value. The caps put on them are enough for most people and if you go over your limit you won't get cut off; you just have to pay a supplement to use more. With a basic 1GB restriction you