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UAE named as global leader in fibre optics

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The UAE has one of the highest rates of fibre optic penetration in the world, according to a new release by an industry body.

Fibre optic connections are a method of transmitting a near-unlimited amount of digital data using pulses of light and is a technology that is replacing traditional copper wiring for broadband internet networks.

The UAE is now ranked fourth in the world with 30.8 per cent of the country's households and businesses connected to fibre optic systems, behind Japan, South Korea and Hong Kong.

"For the Middle East market, that's a really strong sign of progress," said Hartwig Tauber, the director general of the FTTH [Fibre to the Home] Council Europe.

The announcement was made at the inaugural FTTH Middle East Conference held this week in Beirut.

Although parts of Dubai, such as Dubai Internet City and the Dubai Marina have been connected to a fibre network since 2002, Etisalat has pledged to spend Dh5 billion building a nationwide FTTH network that is scheduled to be completed by the end of next year.

The UAE accounts for 96 per cent of fibre connections in the Middle East through the early success of Etisalat's eLife promotion and could get even higher with the planned infrastructure sharing programme with du scheduled to sometime next year.

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