

Monday 18 February 2013 15:41:43 by [Andrew Ferguson](#)

"The result of this poll is another support for our demand for more transparency and trueness for broadband connections. How can an end-user imagine the 'wow!' feeling of a fibre connection that really delivers 100 Mbps when he only gets a disappointing 'up to'-experience on a DSL or cable connection? Nobody would buy an 'up to' 1 litre milk package at the supermarket – even when the producer gives an estimation that it will be up to 3/4 of a litre in it. So – why do end users still accept it on broadband? And why do consumer protection organisations still accept this habit?"

With the start of the **2013 FTTH Conference in London** now less than 24 hours away, the conference will hopefully help to show investors and others interested in broadband what is possible if the commitment is made to use the best available technology. While many may see the conference focusing on the UK as that is where it is based this year, the conference should allow those rolling out FTTH and those looking at rolling it out to meet colleagues from across Europe and learn from each other.

Oliver Johnson of Point Topic takes a clear swipe at the FTTH Council, over their promotion of FTTH as the solution to broadband problems and that the council needs to play a part in the wider picture.

"Once again the UK will be near the bottom of the list, with FTTH coverage and customers both well under 1%. The fact that Docsis 3 cable and VDSL both play a much bigger part than FTTH in delivering superfast broadband to European homes will not be mentioned."
(with respect to the FTTH Coverage announcement lined up for the conference)

Oliver Johnson, CEO at Point Topic

While there is a lot of merit to the Point Topic comments, in the UK if there was not bodies pushing the boundaries we would end up believing the TV advertising that fibre optic broadband was available now, and it is this advertising that leads to a good number of the general public believing they have fibre optic cabling in the home now via people like Virgin Media.

The reality of FTTH is that if one takes the view that by rolling it out now, you are building infrastructure with a 25 year life span, rather than five to ten year life span that VDSL2 probably has. DOCSIS 3.x cable products are not dead yet, but without continued significant investment in local capacity, the new owners of Virgin Media may see market share shrinking.

When steam trains first appeared, many thought they were expensive and unreliable compared to a horse and cart, but some visionaries kept plugging away and while not all the rail projects flourished. Admittedly the last fifty years has seen a shrinking of the network. The question to ask is Fibre to the Home something that while not everyone needs it today, in fifty years time those countries that took the building of it seriously will be the powerhouses of a digital globe, with countries like the **UK appearing in history books as where it all started, but is now just an also ran.**

To answer the question posed by Point Topic *'Is the UK a failure or a leader in superfast broadband?'* It is not a failure, roll-out of VDSL and the upgrades from Virgin Media have been extensive already but there is nothing wrong in wanting to do better, turn your back in the IT world for a week and you can find yourself out of date and out of a job.

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Posted by undecidedadrian 7 days ago

Of course in 50 years time there may have been a completely new way of transmitting data and even fiber then may be out of date.

There has already been major breakthroughs in material sciences in the last 20 years alone and IF somebody manages to stumble on ambient temperature superconductors then everybody will be looking at a whole new infrastructure.

This is just one possible scenario.

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It always makes me laugh how we get stories such as "in 50 years time..." with hindsight it is always proved utterly wrong. So how can we be so much more confident that we'll be right?

Posted by FTTH 7 days ago

2000, I could get 0.5Mb (I was paying for 0.5Mb)
2012, I now get 1.8Mb (I am paying for 8Mb)

As for the future.
Fibre, even when sold as 1Gb service it is underused. The capability is so much higher and not limited by the line. It is limited by the operator.

Fibre can deliver 100Gb today happily, kit exists.
The 50 Year argument more than stacks up.

100Tb/s has been done - so I would suggest we just get on with it.

Ofcom need to stop working for the operators though, they let them get away with too much to skew the UK figures.

Posted by themanstan 7 days ago

But, people highlight Korea where people on 100Mb packages complain because they cannot get 100Mb... it's 40Mb throughput.

Upto will still be needed as ISPs will not deliver the throughput that the technology is capable of.

Posted by KarlAustin 7 days ago

More correctly, "people will not pay the price for what the technology is capable of". If customers would pay for it, ISPs would deliver it.

Posted by FTTH 7 days ago

@themanstan
You are right even on fibre if GEAPON is fully utilized you can be down to 32Mb. It would have to be fully saturated though. Which I would suggest is pretty Rare. 10GEAPON is due to roll out so that should ease the problem.

@KarlAustin
Disagree - I pay what the DSL technology is capable of. The ISP does not deliver it.

I would pay Gigaclear for 1Gb quite happily.
If you buy 30Mb you get 30Mb, with 1Gb if it is available.

The industry needs a kick up the.. and some honesty. Can't see it happening though.

Posted by undecidedadrian 7 days ago

@FTTH no the 50 year projection DOES NOT STAND.

How can we even project 50 years in the future when the microprocessor is only 40 years old and home data connections have only been really available for 25 years.

There has been so much advancement in the last 4 decades that some special interest group keeps trying to sell their equipment may all be obsolete in the next 2 decades.

At least with FTTP on demand we WILL see the true demand for FTTP and I think the FTTP or bust brigade will get a nasty shock.

Posted by KarlAustin 7 days ago

@FTTH - Indeed you do pay for what DSL is capable of, and that's what you get, what it is capable of. You can't bend the laws of physics.

My comment was more in relation to @themanstan. People aren't willing to pay for uncontended services, so they get a contended service so they shouldn't be surprised if throughput isn't always headline speed.

Posted by FTTH 7 days ago

@undecidedadrian
Fair comment, who knows where we will be in 50 Years.

Fibre is the fastest transmission medium that is freely available today. It is very cost effective.

It's great to see optimism though! Normally its all negative with 'no possible need for more than 24Mb' (cough - BT - Ahem - Cough)... Now 100Tb/s is not enough. I like it.

Posted by herdwick 7 days ago

Consumer bodies don't "allow" the use of "up to" - it was the Advertising Standards Authority that insisted on it.

While we're paying for 100 kbits/s of capacity we should expect it to slow down when its busy, shouldn't we ?

Posted by Somerset 6 days ago

It would be interesting for someone to ask the FTTH Council how they view FOD. I read that they consider the availability not close enough and therefore discount it.

Is it right to focus on the method of delivery (of its members products) rather than the end to end service available to a customer?

Objection to 'up to' needs to be answered by how ADSL should be marketed. It is just that the inherent science behind it jars with those who have a product to sell.

Of course FTTC has a lot of fibre in it...

Posted by GMAN99 6 days ago

What a stupid comparison comparing it to milk!?

I see no issue at all in what is being done, FTTC for the vast majority and then when people want more they can buy FTTP should they wish.

Up to will remain in the future I expect, not because of physical limitations (DSL) because its a contended service

Posted by andrew (banned staff member) 6 days ago

@somerset In terms of homes passed and counted correct FoD does not count in that respect.

One one house has the 8 or 12 line manifold installed, of course the other 7 or 11 can count on the passed list.

ADSL has a lot of fibre in it, 3 miles of copper and 300 miles of fibre if you live in Newcastle and ISP uses London POP.

Posted by chilting 6 days ago

I'm not sure what we will have in 50 years time but I do know that the copper that gives me about 1.3 meg per line is about 50 years old.

I wonder what the residents of 1960's West Chilton would have thought of our technology, or lack of it, today.

Posted by Kushan 6 days ago

Debating what may or may not happen in 50 years is irrelevant. We already know the limits of copper for the "last mile" and the only actual future-proof technology is fibre optics to the household. Should that change in 50 years time so be it, but copper won't last 50 years at the rate we're heading whereas fibre will.

Posted by bartman007 4 days ago

Will we have Crude Oil in 50 years time?

Posted by alexdow about 20 hours ago

The original Preston By-Pass (M6)-

was built to 110 MPH standards,
has been "throttled" to 70 MPH Speed Limit for many years;
and frequently the achievable speeds are significantly less, due to congestion (ignoring accidents etc).

How should that be advertised in Broadband terminology?

Posted by broadband66 about 14 hours ago

Most home users don't require such fast speed that fibre can deliver. Just give people living further from an exchange the chance to receive a reasonable speed and most people in the UK would be quite happy.

Surely a minimum of... say 20mbps down 5mbps up would be more than enough to satisfy most.

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