

broadband Q&As

Anyone who regularly reads the national press may have noticed BT's recent advertising campaign that's characterised by the slogan "Come on Britain, you know you want it". It is part of BT Wholesale's strategy to discover pockets of demand for broadband in areas without ADSL-enabled telephone exchanges.

What exactly is the preregistration scheme?

BT Wholesale has rolled out over 1,000 ADSL-enabled telephone exchanges across the UK, covering two thirds of the British population. In these areas there are enough inhabitants for BT to justify the considerable investment. In more remote locations, however, upgrades are a riskier business. BT can't be sure of sufficient signups to generate the profits its shareholders require.

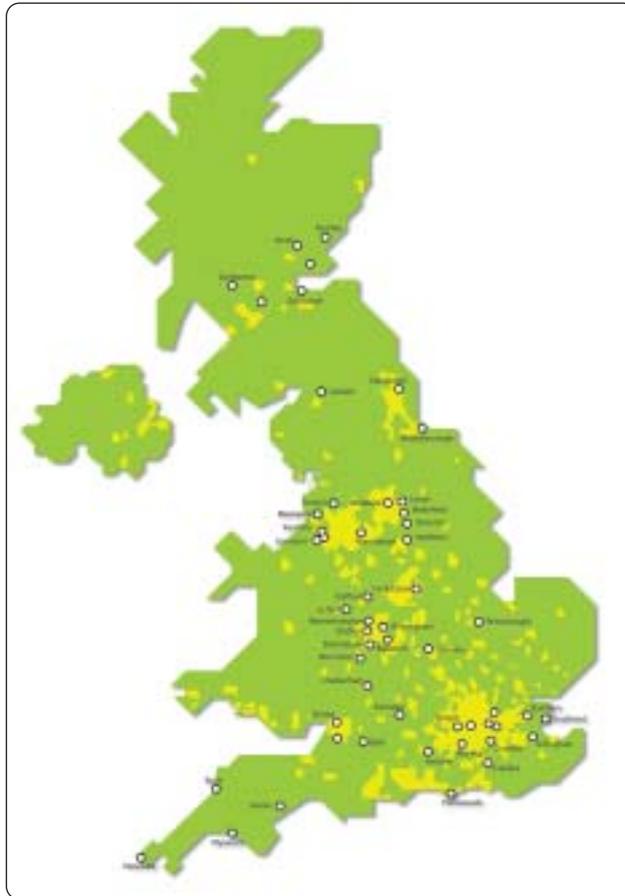
A preregistration scheme allows BT to sniff out pockets of demand. When enough households have indicated their interest in an ADSL connection, a so-called 'trigger level' is reached and BT can upgrade the local exchange safe in the knowledge it won't be making a loss.

How do I register?

You can only register if a trigger level has been set for your area. Triggers have so far been set for 595 exchanges and more are currently under review. To find out whether a trigger level has been set for your exchange go to www.bt.com/broadband and click on 'Level of demand'. If a trigger has been set you can then register your interest through an ISP that buys ADSL wholesale from BT. The ISP formally feeds that information back to BT.

How many registrations are needed before a trigger level is reached?

It varies from exchange to exchange because of the differing costs involved in



upgrading exchanges. Figures range between 200-500 registrations.

How quickly is the registration tracker updated?

It takes between 24-48 hours to update from the time the ISP informs BT of a new registration.

Will I be committed to ordering ADSL from the ISP I placed my order with?

No, you can obtain ADSL through any ISP of your choice once your local exchange is enabled.

What happens when the trigger level is reached?

BT informs the ISPs that the trigger level has been reached, after which the ISPs then have six weeks to get in touch with people who have registered. Three quarters of those registrations need to be converted into formal orders before BT will enable the exchange.

Does a business registration carry more importance than a residential one?

We believe so. If an exchange shows a lot of interest from office registrations BT Wholesale may revise its trigger levels downwards, potentially accelerating ADSL activation. It has been suggested that some of the ADSL campaign groups have been encouraging members to register for products in the office range in a bid to bring broadband to their area.

How many people have signed up so far?

Around a quarter of a million people have so far registered their interest.

How many exchanges have actually been activated?

More than 25 exchanges have either been enabled or have a date set for an ADSL upgrade as a direct result of the registration scheme. At the time of writing there was a total of 215,000 registrations on the scheme. The breakdown of these figures is that:

- 10 exchanges have been enabled, taking the overall total to 1,129 enabled exchanges;
- 15 exchanges are in the build stage and will be enabled by the end of February 03;
- 18 exchanges are presently in the confirmation stage.

How many more exchanges have hit their respective trigger levels?

A further 23 exchanges have achieved their triggers. Once the trigger has been reached, ISPs have up to six weeks to convert three quarters of the registrations into customers at which point BT will then set a date for the exchange to be upgraded. ■