

# broadband news

## ADSL ISPs put a foot on the broadband gas

ADSL ISPs are turning up the heat on Britain's cable companies – NTL and Telewest – offering downstream speeds of up to 2Mbps (megabits per second) to residential customers.

ADSL reseller Nildram is introducing both a 1Mbps and 2Mbps ADSL service with a contention ratio of 50:1 (up to 50 users will share the same bandwidth), giving the company the edge on rival cable providers which currently offer maximum speeds of 1Mbps to home users.

Nildram's dslXtra1000 service is priced at £39.99 a month – that's £10 more than its standard Home 500 service. The 2Mbps service, the dslXtra2000, costs £63.99 a month. Both prices include VAT.

Nildram joins fellow ADSL ISP Bulldog ([www.bulldogdsl.com](http://www.bulldogdsl.com)), which recently announced similar residential services in the central London area. Unlike Bulldog, however, Nildram is offering the faster speeds at around 70 percent of exchanges currently enabled for ADSL.

Internet Central ([www.internet-central.net](http://www.internet-central.net)) has also started selling 1Mbps and 2Mbps services at affordable monthly costs. Its pricing is 1Mbps at £29.99 and

£39.99 for its 2Mbps service. Both prices exclude VAT. Again, the 50:1 contention ratios mean the service is aimed primarily at home and small business users. The services are available to anyone sufficiently close to an ADSL-enabled exchange.

Industry watchers believe such speed increases from Nildram and Internet Central will herald similar moves by rival ISPs anxious to avoid falling behind. Steve Horley, ISP and business development director at Tiscali UK, confirmed the Italian-owned ISP would be introducing a 1Mbps ADSL product by the summer.

Meanwhile BT Wholesale, which sells ADSL connections to the UK's ISPs, is also mulling over the possibility of the rollout of a Home 1000 1Mbps service.

Joe Coleman, product marketing manager for BT Wholesale, told *PC Advisor* that "there is clearly a demand for higher speeds" and confirmed that the company was looking at a 1Mbps consumer product.

Coleman also said BT Wholesale was considering a more competitively priced 256Kbps product, which would bring ADSL broadband provision below the all-important £20 per month price point.



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## Broadband means business

UK Online for Business, part of the DTI

(Department of Trade and Industry), has launched a nationwide awareness campaign to promote the benefits of broadband to small businesses.

"The Broadband for Business campaign is saying this is what the technology can offer your business: better efficiency, increased profit and a better relationship with your customers," said Elizabeth Grant, director of UK Online for Business.

"If this doesn't resonate, then don't buy. But if it does, come to us for impartial advice," continued Grant.

The campaign kicked off last month with radio and print advertising as well as sponsored taxis. "There's lots of broadband hype and media coverage, but very little dispassionate advice about what value it brings to a business," said Grant. "In some cases that's very easy: just moving from variable to fixed telecoms costs can be a straightforward financial gain."

• Visit [www.ukonlineforbusiness.gov.uk](http://www.ukonlineforbusiness.gov.uk) for more information.



## It's all in the pricing

Pricing – not content – is by far the most important factor when considering a broadband ISP.

That's the message from a recent online *PC Advisor* poll, in which over half of the respondents say they would opt for the ISP offering the cheapest monthly fees.

Less than four percent (3.8 percent) indicated that content was their most important consideration, which would seem to require a change of tack from so-called content-rich ISPs.

Almost a quarter (22.3 percent) consider speed to be the most important factor when choosing a broadband provider, which is good news for the ADSL ISPs that have recently announced 2Mbps services to home users. More than one in 10 respondents (13.5 percent), meanwhile, put the ability to avoid being tied into a 12-month contract at the top of their shopping list.

