De-mystifying ADSL and other internet connections.
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What is ADSL? ADSL or 'asymmetric digital subscriber line' is normally the cheapest and easiest way for small to middle size companies to connect to the internet. Long gone are the days of modem connections via a phone line or ISDN.

The main benefit of ADSL are the fast download speeds at a fixed monthly cost. The disadvantages are slow upload speeds and the dependence of being near an ADSL enabled exchange. Fortunately there are now more and more exchanges that have been converted, and on the eve of ADSL2 becoming available, more companies will benefit from faster speeds and companies who were previously outside the catchments areas will be able to use ADSL.

All that is required to connect your computers to ADSL is a BT phone line, ADSL enabled exchange, ADSL micro filter which splits the phone and data signals so you can still use the phone while connected to the internet, an ADSL modem or router and a good friendly ISP – Internet Service Provider.

The maximum download speeds are limited to 2MB at the moment, however in April 2006 BT have announced that ADSL2 will be available, which could mean an increase in download speeds of up to 8MB. Another development is LLU or Local Loop Unbundling where your ISP is installing there own ADSL equipment in BT exchanges which can improve speeds of downloads and take them away from being dependant on BT which decreases their costs which is usually past on to their customers.

Other internet connections include SDSL, leased line, ISDN and 56K modems. The pros and cons are detailed below.

Product	Speeds	Cost	Advantages	Disadvantages
ADSL	512K – 2MB	From £19.99 month	Fixed cost. Fast download speed	Slow upload speeds 256K
Modem 56K	Up to 56K	Cost of a local call 0845 numbers	All required is a phone line	Slow, PC's tend to dial up your ISP to check for updates.
ISDN	64K or 128K bonded	Cost of a Local call and if bonded 2 calls per connection	Quicker than modems and can be installed almost anywhere	Slow and expensive
SDSL *symmetric digital subscriber line*	Speeds 512K – 2MB	£125 month	The upload speed is the same as the download speed.	Cost
Leased Line	Speeds up to 128MB	From £1700 a month	Greater speeds, symmetrical lines, dedicated equipment and	Cost

			line.	

In today's business climate the minimum a business should have for internet connectivity is an ADSL line. The costs start at £19.99 a month for a 2MB download speeds.