

Broadband demystified

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The information revolution has produced jargon and acronyms that have frequently left laypeople dazzled and flat on the canvas. It seems that the gurus that drive this unparalleled Age of Innovations derive pleasure from conjuring terms that make the rest of the members of the society appear like blockheads.

Remember when you first discovered that the “mouse” had nothing to do with that bothersome pest or that to “ping” was not a call to play ping-pong?

The downside to it has been obvious though. Oftentimes, the people who really need these technological solutions have been led to assume that newly introduced services and applications are only the preserve of technical gurus who understand their intricacies.

Ubiquitous mantra

In recent times, “broadband” has become the ubiquitous mantra. Though this latest technological service is of immense value, its targeted beneficiaries are yet to make the head and tail of what all the hullabaloo is about.

However, everyone who is keen to leverage the Internet should be excited with the benefits it provides.

Broadband refers to any always on, high speed connection to the Internet. It represents the ultimate in new generation transmission of data and video using the existing telephone copper wires at speeds that were only imaginable a few years ago. This technology also facilitates the transfer of huge files of any format. To use an analogy, broadband is like a big highway with many lanes on which numerous cars can travel at the same time.

Though there have been arguments on what speeds define a fast connection, there is anonymity on that any connection providing data transfer at a rate of 100 Kbps is considered a broadband connection. The acronym Kbps stands for kilo bytes/bits per second and it is a unit that is used to measure the amount of information that can flow at a given time.

Biggest advantage is speed

The benefits of broadband are awesome for both individual users and businesses. The biggest advantage that broadband technologies bring is speed. Advances in technology have produced new services and applications on the Internet and a user will be able to fully experience what the web has to offer with a high speed broadband connection.

By offering an always-on Internet connectivity, a user does not have to wait for as many as five minutes in order to get a connection. A frustrating feature of dial-up connections is the frequency with which the connection breaks. However, this becomes a thing of the past with a broadband alternative.

A user pays no extra charges for being online as they always get a predictable, flat monthly billing. For example, subscription to a two gigabyte account means that the user will have to pay R137.50 per month. This price will not vary unless he upgrades the account.

Broadband connectivity has spawned the growth of home offices. Home-based businesses have minimal overhead costs and the owners enjoy flexible working hours.

Most companies spend thousands of rands annually in work-related travel as they have to cater for airfares, hotels, meals, car rentals and allowances. However, by utilising broadband-enabled Webconferencing, these companies can reduce the number of trips that are made by their executives and thereby cut costs.

Facilitate internal communication

Networks that are built on the backbone of a broadband infrastructure facilitate internal communication within an organisation. This includes emails and file sharing. Let's say an employee wants a file on the accounting transactions of the past month. He does not have to wait for his colleague to find it and email it to him. He can simply access it on the network folder. Large files can also be transferred directly from the head offices to local offices located in other cities and countries. Productivity is enhanced in this way.

Various online transactions are enabled with a broadband connection. Billings, utility payments and attendant e-marketing resources become available.

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