



Winner: E2BN with Connecting Schools

The Challenge

The East of England is an area almost forgotten by the telecoms industry and is one of the most geographically challenging regions in the UK. With over 2,000 schools, many of them small and in extremely remote areas the task of providing high speed, affordable Internet connectivity was always going to be very challenging. The broadband infrastructure needed to be robust with 99.99% uptime, secure and capable of supporting data intensive applications such as multimedia and video conferencing.

The Solution

E2BN has delivered, in the East of England, a dual 10GB core infrastructure with access to the Internet. By building 10GB high capacity POPs (Points of Presence) E2BN has greatly reduced the cost of backhaul; one of the barriers to companies provisioning broadband to rural areas.

Working with E2BN partners, JANET (UK), and the 10 Local Authorities in the East of England, E2BN infrastructure allows schools, Local Authorities, libraries, colleges and universities robust, safe and secure access to the Internet, greatly reducing costs. For example, one local authority now receives 10 times more bandwidth (1GB) at a similar annual cost to what they were paying previously for 100MB.

This ongoing project now delivers broadband evenly across the region, encompassing nearly 2,000 schools, as well as the other public sector sites, colleges and universities. E2BN is working with the commercial sector, as well as with Economic Development departments within Local Authorities to exploit this Public Sector infrastructure for the benefit of the community. This network is seen by many as being the corner stone of the East of England's delivery of PSN and the EU's commitment to Broadband for all citizens.

The Achievement

All schools have been connected to broadband and most have been upgraded to 10MB (primary schools) and 100MB (secondary schools).

There is a dual 10GB resilient infrastructure throughout the region with 10 high capacity Points of Presence with many minor breakout points.

Nine Local Authorities already have 1GB feeds, with one LA with two 1GB feeds; all the universities and colleges have a mix of 100MB and 1GB feeds, with Cambridge and University of East Anglia on the 10GB pipes. This has been achieved by ensuring everyone concerned collaborates and shares their expertise. By aggregating the demand across the region and combining contracts E2BN has acted as the 'intelligent procurer'. This approach has allowed industry to reflect the lower cost of sale with greatly improved pricing and service for the whole region. Costs have reduced, availability improved, throughput and capacity increased and management improved. Without E2BN's approach to aggregation many schools would be trying to deliver 21st Century learning via 20th Century infrastructure.