

21 Shakespeare Close  
Newport Pagnell  
Bucks  
MK16 8RY

Telephone: 01908 218668  
Mobile: 07920 096718  
Email: [info@itsupportline.co.uk](mailto:info@itsupportline.co.uk)  
Website: [www.IT Support Line.co.uk](http://www.IT Support Line.co.uk)

**IT Support  
Line Ltd**



Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2015

## **Ofcom Strategic Review of Digital Communications**

Response from:

Paul Holoway BSc MBCS CITP  
Managing Director of IT Support Line Ltd based in Newport Pagnell.

### **Contact Details:**

Paul Holoway BSc MBCS CITP

IT Support Line Ltd  
21 Shakespeare Close  
Newport Pagnell  
Bucks  
MK16 8RY

Telephone: 01908 218668  
Mobile: 07920 096718  
Email: [Paul.Holoway@itsupportline.co.uk](mailto:Paul.Holoway@itsupportline.co.uk)

IT Support Line Ltd provides adhoc IT support to home users and small businesses around the Milton Keynes area. As part of the role in providing support to users, I have seen many home and small business users broadband issues and users have expressed their views to me about the quality of services provided by their ISP.

I would like to express my views to Ofcom about what should be done to improve the digital state of our Nation. There are several issues at stake – infrastructure, consumer choice and quality of service.

In terms of infrastructure, BT Openreach control of UK telecommunication lines should be removed and given independence away from British Telecommunications. British Telecommunications has been reluctant to improve the UK infrastructure and appears to put barriers to help slow the spread of improved broadband for all.

If we look back in the history of internet access, we had dialup internet, followed by the BT Highway, followed by basic or standard broadband which each provided an improved level of speed and reliability.

In the Business, Innovation and Skills Committee meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2009, there were discussions about the UK Government universal broadband, 50p levy and minimum broadband speeds where the Group Strategy Director of BT Group gave evidence of examples where BT is not being able (or willing) to commit to the universal 2Mb in every locality (Page 66 of <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmselect/cmbis/72/72.pdf>).

There are households within 5 miles of Newport Pagnell where they are still not able to get 2Mb.

If today, we lived in a society where the internet did not exist and thus no need for broadband, there would be no discussion on whether BT should own Openreach. Everyone would pay the same rate for their copper land line and the telephone packages would be competitive with other suppliers. No supplier would want the work that Openreach does in extending the copper connections from the telephone exchange to the home.

In reality today, Openreach provides much more than a copper land line, it opens households to new technologies and improved home life: internet shopping, banking and entertainment as well as business communications.

BT have just pushed up the price of the line rental to £17.99, I cannot see a justification for this increase, they haven't upgraded the copper quality on my home phone. I suspect that as more home users reduce their land line call usage, BT needs to increase revenue by charging more for the same connection that most homes have. I would think that many telephone package suppliers would like to have had that option!

Another example of BT charges was a product called FTTP on Demand which was launched on 29th April 2013. FTTP on Demand is the Superfast Fibre Access for areas where FTTC has been enabled along with the additional equipment required to allow broadband speeds up to 330Mb/s.

On 1st May 2014, BT raised their prices for connections from £500 to £750 and increased the distance-related costs from £2.00 to £3.50 per meter thus 50% increase on the connection cost and 75% on the distance cost. An increase which had no justification and it placed a barrier on my interest in the product.

BT could have used the free standing telephone boxes as wireless internet access points, but their lack of vision meant they removed or left neglected.

I would like to see Openreach separated away from BT Group and spun into its own entity with it to focus on providing better services for all stakeholders including consumers, businesses, and internet service providers including mobile providers.

I think the trust in BT has diminished and they cannot provide the foresight and enthusiasm that is needed to grow the UK infrastructure into an improved and increased capacity for internet technologies.

It is clear that land line fibre connections to every household will never be achievable, but stakeholder solutions working together using differing technologies is likely to improve internet access for all. Openreach should be part of this process and allow it to open up its infrastructure.

In the next 10 years...

I would hope that all communities have access to broadband speeds above 20Mb/s whether it is mobile, landline, cable or powerline solutions for a reasonable price;  
All new housing developments have access to fibre to the premises;

Yours sincerely



Paul Holoway  
Managing Director  
IT Support Line Limited