



Australian Government
National Office for the Information Economy

BROADBAND



In the Home

Why broadband?

Broadband is a dynamic technology that lets you experience much faster access to the Internet - so you can make better use of your time.

Broadband is generally 10-20 times faster than the dial-up connection you've probably been using. With broadband you can forget about the 'world wide wait' - you can surf the net and download files at speed. With broadband you'll have access to the Internet 24 hours a day without having to dial-up multiple times, because whenever your computer is on, you can be connected to the Internet. No more wasting time and money continually dialing up to the Internet, you can use the Internet immediately whenever it suits you.

Broadband puts you in control of your Internet use.

Broadband doesn't tie up your phone line, either - you can be on the phone and connected to the Internet at the same time. So you won't miss any important calls. With broadband you can stop what you're doing online, deal with more pressing matters and come back without losing where you were up to or worrying about missed calls. With broadband you won't have to feel like rushing to do the things you want to do online.

In a world where technology is changing rapidly, broadband is fast becoming an essential tool. Websites with exciting graphics, sound and video entice us daily and it won't be too long before applications that rely on broadband, such as videoconferencing, are commonplace. So why wait? With broadband you can start on the path to this future today!

LOOK AT SOME OF THE THINGS YOU CAN DO QUICKLY AND EASILY WITH BROADBAND:

- Send your friends and family your latest photos or even home videos in a flash.
- Check out the surf or snow conditions by literally seeing for yourself whether it's worth the trip.
- Do your shopping from home any time of the day or night. No crowds, no parking problems, no frustratingly slow Internet connection.
- Work from home. With the speed of broadband you'll think you're right there in the office.
- Download software upgrades and other files quickly and easily.
- Access everything in the largest and most up to date library in the world - a library that never closes.
- Tour the world from the comfort of your home by taking a virtual tour that includes video, 3D walk throughs and audio.
- Play interactive games with lightning fast response times.
- Watch a movie or a video clip of your favourite band - without having to wait all day. You could even watch a live concert from anywhere in the world.
- Do a number of these things, all at the same time.



With broadband you'll have the world at your fingertips.

Making it happen

WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF BROADBAND?

There are a number of different types of broadband access. The one you choose will depend largely on your personal needs and location

- **ADSL** – uses your existing phone line for both voice and internet access at the same time
- **CABLE** – your pay TV connection can also deliver broadband to your home
- **SATELLITE** – uses a satellite dish, usually installed on your rooftop and is available everywhere, but can be a more expensive option
- **WIRELESS** – uses radio communications rather than wired connections.

WHAT CHOICES DO I HAVE?

That will depend mainly on where you live and the amount you wish to spend.

To install cable Internet, the physical cable must run past your home. If cable TV is already available to you then cable Internet will be also.

If you'd like to use ADSL, visit the Broadband Xchange website (www.broadbandxchange.org) and follow the "Can I get a DSL service?" prompt to find out if ADSL is available to you. Your local telephone exchange must be enabled for ADSL and you must live within approximately 3.5km of the exchange to get ADSL.

Satellite Internet is available everywhere but it can be more expensive than other options.

Wireless Internet is being trialled in several parts of Australia and could become more accessible in the near future.

HOW DO I GET BROADBAND?

Broadband is generally supplied by an Internet Service Provider or ISP. Your ISP is your gateway to the Internet. An ISP:

- provides your Internet connection
- sends and collects your email messages
 - can host your website if you have or require one.

To help you select an ISP, the Broadband Xchange website (www.broadbandxchange.org) lists ISPs who are Broadband Xchange sponsors and provide Broadband access. Broadband Choice (www.broadbandchoice.com.au) also provides a list of ISPs offering broadband by states/territories and regions.

CAN I USE THE COMPUTER I ALREADY HAVE?

If you have bought your computer in recent years then it is probably fine for use with broadband, but if you have any doubts, your ISP or computer retailer will be able to help you.

If you choose ADSL or cable broadband, you will need an ADSL or cable modem. Your ISP will usually supply this and include it in the connection fee.

Satellite and wireless broadband require specialised equipment which some ISPs also provide.

HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?

The cost of your broadband connection will depend on the ISP you choose and the plan you select. You will usually be asked to pay:

- a one-off connection fee and/or installation charge that often includes the cost of a broadband modem
- a monthly access fee (which will often include a data allowance)
- a fee for downloading data in excess of your monthly allowance.

ISPs will usually offer a number of plans with varying prices, download limits and speeds. Some ISPs are beginning to offer plans that do not have a download limit. Generally the higher the download allowance and the faster speed of the connection, the higher the monthly access fee. A typical starting price in 2003 is around \$55 per month. This compares favorably to the cost of dial-up, especially if you have a second phone line dedicated to the Internet.

	DIAL-UP	BROADBAND
Monthly ISP cost	\$25	\$55
Monthly line rental (2nd line)	\$25	Nil
Monthly dial-up charges (1 call per day @ 25c/call)	\$7.50	Nil
Total	\$57.50	\$55

DO I NEED TO WORRY ABOUT SECURITY?

Any use of the Internet poses certain security and privacy risks for your computer files. With broadband you are always connected to the Internet and exposed to these risks as long as your computer is turned on. All Internet users, and especially those on broadband should invest in a good firewall and a virus checker to protect their computer.

A *firewall* watches your Internet connection and blocks others from trying to gain access to your computer without your permission. A *virus checker* scans your computer for known viruses.

What do you mean?

You may come across the following terms when reading about broadband and it would be helpful to understand them before speaking to an ISP.

BROADBAND SPEEDS

The speed at which information travels between the Internet and your computer is measured in kbit/s (kilobits per second, i.e. thousands of bits per second.) Broadband speeds will usually be advertised in the format download speed/upload speed.

For example, the advertised speed 256/64 means the service will let you download information (that is, receive information from the Internet or other computers) at a *maximum* speed of 256 kbit/s and upload (send information to the Internet or other computers) at a *maximum* of 64 kbit/s.

You will often download much more information than you upload, so a fast download speed is the more important factor.

UPLOAD AND DOWNLOAD LIMITS

Most ISPs set a limit on the amount of data you can upload or download for your monthly access fee. Some ISPs include upload traffic in their limits, others do not count upload traffic at all. For the average home user a minimal download limit (such as 500Mb) is usually sufficient. But if you (or your children) plan to download large files such as movies or lots of music, or play interactive games on a regular basis, you may need a higher allowance.

ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

An acceptable use policy is a written agreement with your Internet service provider that you will use their system responsibly. All ISPs have an Acceptable Use Policy as well as a set of Terms and Conditions to which you will have to agree.

DISCLAIMER

This brochure has been prepared by the National Office for the Information Economy (NOIE) and the Service Providers Industry Association (SPAN). While due care has been exercised by NOIE and SPAN to ensure the accuracy and currency of the material contained in this publication, it is recommended that users undertake their own analysis of information and obtain appropriate advice about their own circumstances. In particular, information about specific broadband services (including the nature and availability of services, price etc) should be confirmed with the service provider concerned.

© Commonwealth of Australia 2003

This work is copyright. Apart from any use as permitted under the Copyright Act 1968, no part may be reproduced by any process without the prior written permission from the Commonwealth. Requests and inquiries concerning reproduction and rights in this publication should be addressed to: Manager, Public Affairs, National Office for the Information Economy, GPO Box 390, Canberra ACT 2601

More Information

ABOUT NOIE

NOIE is the Australian Government agency aimed at helping Australians create a world-class online economy and society through its work developing, overseeing, and coordinating Australian Government policy on e-commerce, online services, broadband and the Internet.

Burns Centre, 28 National Circuit, Forrest ACT 2603
GPO Box 390, Canberra ACT 2601

Phone: [+61] 02 6271 1666

Fax: [+61] 02 6271 1563

Email: broadband@noie.gov.au

Website: www.noie.gov.au

ABOUT SPAN BROADBAND XCHANGE

Broadband Xchange is a project established by SPAN, the Service Providers Industry Association. It was commenced in 2001 to demonstrate the value of broadband to typical business and consumer audiences and to stimulate the market to reach its full potential. It is funded by industry sponsors Alcatel, Connect, Ericsson, iPrimus, Microsoft, Neighbourhood cable, NEXTEP, Pacific Internet, Powercor, Request, Sensis, Singtel Optus, Southern Cross Cable Network and Telstra.

Level 11 / 157 Walker St, North Sydney NSW 2060
PO Box 1432, North Sydney NSW 2059

Phone: [+61] 02 9955 6100

Fax: [+61] 02 9955 2502

Email: info@broadbandxchange.org

Website: www.broadbandxchange.org

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND THE ARTS

38 Sydney Avenue, Forrest ACT 2603
GPO Box 2154, Canberra ACT 2601

Phone: [+61] 02 6271 1000

Fax: [+61] 6271 1901

Email: dcita.mail@dcita.gov.au

Website: www.dcita.gov.au

August 2003