



Connecting the Coast

February 2009 – Connecting to the internet

The way we connect to the internet has been changing rapidly over the last 10 years or so. Originally the only way to connect was using your phone line. This is "narrow bandwidth" The speed of access with dial-up (a maximum of 56kbps) is very slow and what we are able to do online is very limited.

To speed up access to the internet using the existing copper line, ADSL was created. This technology allowed the use of the phone at the same time as being online. With most people connecting at between 512kbps and 1.5mbps, this technology is 9 to 26 times the speed of a dialup connection. A number of providers offer this service across the Sunshine Coast. It is limited to a maximum of 4.5klms from your nearest exchange.

To sell this faster way of connecting to the internet, the sales/marketing people coined the term "Broadband". This is actually short for 'Broad Bandwidth'. The wider your bandwidth, the greater the amount of information that can be transmitted simultaneously.

Today, if your business or home is within 1.5klms of an exchange, ADSL2+ is a faster form of broadband. With speeds of up to 22mbps this service is a significant advance on dial-up.

There are now a number of competing wireless networks delivering wireless broadband. A number of carriers offer 3G options. You will need to check with their coverage maps to confirm the option in your location. 3G offers mobile broadband meaning you can take your connection with you, so long as there is network coverage. The price of these services has come down significantly in recent months, but be careful with the down load limits. Wifi and WiMax are two other wireless broadband solutions on the Sunshine Coast.

In remote or sparsely populated areas, satellite offers a solution to receive broadband services.

In a limited number of locations across Australia, people in businesses and homes connect directly to the internet using Optic Fibre. Used as the primary method of connection in other countries, optic fibre is becoming more cost effective to use. Developers can use this technology to offer other services, such as medical alert, in home health care, free to air television (no aerial required), pay TV and cost effective security.