

Press Release

Alternative platform providers outline the Route to Real Broadband Choice

Conference Explores the Benefits to Consumers of True Competition

Ireland, Wednesday 2nd July 2008: Real broadband competition is critical to delivering more choice, access and better value for consumers in Ireland. The existence of alternative infrastructures has proven to be the recipe for this. This was the main conclusion from a conference organized by UPC Ireland, Digiweb and Magnet Networks entitled 'The Real Broadband Alternatives' in the Westin Hotel today. The conclusion was endorsed by Eamon Ryan, TD and minister responsible for Communications. The group of high profile speakers outlined the winning strategies for Ireland to continue its broadband growth during Ireland's challenging economic times.

The main theme throughout the half day conference was for the private sector to continue with its investment programmes to create competition and to optimize the opportunities the information sector can deliver to communities across Ireland.

In the opening address, Minister for Communications, Eamon Ryan TD said:

"I believe that it is important to encourage the private sector to take a proactive role in shaping Ireland's broadband progression. I believe that key to this progression will be the stimulation of competition in the marketplace which will help to ensure that the demands of the Irish consumer be met with high quality, efficient and competitively priced broadband services."

The CEO of each company provided a well documented account of how each provider is contributing to moving Ireland further up the OECD broadband league table.

Robert Dunn, CEO of UPC Ireland said:

"Delivering real broadband choice is critical to delivering more choice, access and better value for consumers. The development in broadband in Europe has already shown that countries with strong, infrastructure-based competition frequently take the lead in terms of overall household penetration of broadband services."

Mark Kellett, CEO of Magnet Networks said:

"An IP Tsunami is fast approaching and we need to embrace this eventuality as it will sweep away those technology platforms that have failed to invest or innovate. It is no longer relevant to talk about Web 2.0. We need to look at Web 3.0 and beyond to see how our lives will be transformed by the internet in the next decade. It is vital, in today's competitive environment that we take advantage of the best technologies available so that we are truly positioned for success on the world stage. There is an incredible opportunity for Ireland Inc. to be the big wave surfer that rides the Tsunami to success."

Colm Piercy, CEO of Digiweb said:

“The deployment of innovative and competing infrastructure is the only viable route to achieving new telecoms services and better pricing for Irish consumers and businesses, and are vital if Ireland is to remain competitive in the current and future environment. “

In the final address of the conference John Ward from Booz & company said:

“The race for the convergent, all IP digital home is going at full speed across most of Europe. There is a tremendous opportunity for Ireland to catch up with the rest of the developed European markets even during slower economic times. The prerequisites for this will be continued investment into broadband infrastructure, new services and an open, investment friendly regulatory environment.”