

## **“Broadband Internet Choices”**

Technology is often associated with speed in the sense that with every major improvement or new device or process, we are able to experience things at a faster rate than before. Devices and services like the microwave, electronic media, telephone booking and motor vehicles are examples of how our daily tasks and access to entertainment and information have been sped up allowing us to do more than ever in less time.

The Internet is a prime example of where better technology has firstly allowed wide and instantaneous access to information on a scale never before seen. Then with the advent of better methods of data transfer, the rate and magnitude that we are able to receive this information has is continually quickening. As such with some of the inventions mentioned earlier, once humans are exposed to this speed, it often taken for granted and any notion of going back to older cumbersome methods and products is often met with disgust.

Broadband Internet, whether it is ADSL, Cable or Satellite, is fast becoming one of those necessities for all modern businesses and homes. With the volume of information becoming larger and the ongoing costs of broadband Internet being similar and often cheaper than the older dial up technology, it makes little practical or financial sense for businesses and homes to remain on the older technology. ADSL Internet is where existing phone lines are used for high speed data transfer and is offered by hundreds of carriers but Telstra owns and is responsible for the maintenance of the phone line network in Australia. Cable Internet utilises the overhead cables on Power Lines and is only offered by Telstra and Optus. Satellite Internet is mainly taken up by people in the further outer suburbs and regional areas where Cable and ADSL are not an option. It is also offered by multiple carriers and tends to be more expensive due to the nature of the technology and the need for the satellite dish and installation.

ADSL Internet is fast becoming the preferred choice of consumers due to its highly competitive pricing, lack of requirement for overhead cables to be present, ease of installation and lack of setup costs because the phone line infrastructure is already present. However in many areas of metropolitan Melbourne, businesses and homes are unable to access ADSL because their phone line is not up to scratch. Basically if you are beyond a 3.5 kilometre radius from your local phone exchange the chances of you being able to access ADSL Internet diminishes. The general reason given is the data loss is too high. The radius is continuing to be extended from exchanges but not anywhere near a pace at which many businesses and consumers are demanding. Often it is only when the demand reaches a critical point for a local precinct, that the lines are upgraded to a greater radius. Unfortunately the only true way to find out if you are able to access ADSL is to go through the application process with an Internet Service Provider (ISP) which generally takes around 7 to 10 days.

Often we are asked, to whom should we sign up with and which really is the best ISP. These questions are best answered, as with most things, by doing your homework. If your study your current usage and the vast range of plans available from the multitudes of ISPs, you will no doubt find a good match for your situation. If not talk to your local IT and computing consultant who will no doubt guide you in the right direction.

Although we are in the Information Age, unfortunately it seems as if some of us are more able to take advantage of it than others.

### **Monthly Tip**

Email Backup with Outlook Express – Whether it is important business messages, personal notes or just amusing forwards from friends, it can be quite annoying if not disastrous if you lost you emails. If you go the tools menu, select options and then the maintenance tab you will find a button that says “Store Folder”. If you click this it will tell you where you emails are stored and you will be able to copy that folder to CD or a removable disk drive.

### **Product of the Month**

DVD Burner - It was not long ago that the idea of being able to burn 700MB to a CD was rejoiced. But now that our email boxes are overflowing, and our music collection is ever increasing, the humble CD simply doesn't cut it size wise any more. DVD burners are a very useful and affordable way to overcome this problem. With a 4.7GB capacity, that's 6 to 7 times more than a CD, you can afford to burn just about anything you like to DVD. Current DVD Burners cost between \$200-\$400, making it a very affordable option for backup.

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