



Cybermoor Broadband Connecting Remote Communities

Our partner

The Cybermoor social enterprise began in 2001 with government funding to investigate how digital communications and computers might help boost rural economies.

Alston Moor, in Cumbria, was selected due to its remoteness and the distance that people had to travel to access basic services. The first phase of funding provided over 600 computers for the residents of Alston Moor, enough to put a computer in nearly every home in the community at no cost to the residents. The next step was to provide a broadband network that all of these computers could connect to. Alston Moor now has the highest penetration of broadband in any rural area in England.

Cybermoor also works to promote social inclusion through ICT, including support for hesitant residents who are uncomfortable using a PC and who will benefit from one-to-one support.

Improving the level of skills among residents has been one of the key outputs of the project and 72% of residents have used a PC for home learning.

Cybermoor is a founder member of the Community Broadband Network supporting the growth of broadband across the country.

The challenge

Alston Moor is both the highest market town in England as well as one of the most remote, so conventional high-speed broadband service has not been available.

In 2002 Cybermoor installed the UK's first wireless broadband network in a rural community and Alston Moor quickly became recognised as the "Broadband Capital of Britain" with almost 40% of households having a broadband connection, at the then-fantastic speed of 1 Mbps.

As this original network began to age, equipment failures became increasingly common with the failures occurring in the exposed equipment, and interference with home Wi-Fi networks causing a constant problem.

Moreover as broadband access became increasingly integral to the life of the community, higher bandwidth and greater reach became imperative. Cybermoor needed to improve the speed, reliability and access to their broadband service in a cost effective way.

Highlights

Challenge

To deliver high speed reliable broadband service to a remotely located community.

Solution

Proxim Tsunami™ MP.11 radio links

Benefits

- High speed broadband delivered to a remote 'notspot'
- Improvements in education services in schools with increased parental involvement
- Attraction of new businesses, bringing jobs and significant positive economic impact
- Opportunity for remote monitoring to deliver telemedicine improving access to health services for remote community
- Overall community empowerment and increased community cohesion through communication and participation

Cybermoor Broadband Case Study

The solution

UK Broadband (UKB) supplied Proxim's Tsunami™ MP.11 radios to distribute wireless connection throughout the town. As a result, the entire town is now blanketed with affordable wireless broadband access. And since the household computers were completely subsidised, residents are able to get connected to the Internet right away.

UKB worked closely with Cybermoor to define the detailed network plan ensuring that the optimal solution was developed to meet end-user requirements. During the installation process, UKB has provided comprehensive ongoing support and training to the Cybermoor team.

The upgrade will enable all members of the community in Alston Moor to receive wireless service of up to 12 Mbps. The new network uses the 5.8 GHz frequency, so interference will be reduced.

“The town of Alston Moor is the perfect example of what people can achieve when they are enabled with the right technologies. People are connecting with others in the community, new businesses are coming into the town because of the broadband network, and new jobs have been created.”

Daniel Heery,
Project Manager, Cybermoor

The benefits

While many people debate the legitimacy of the “digital divide” and whether having broadband connectivity truly makes any difference from an economic standpoint, Alston Moor is glaring proof of the opportunities broadband brings.

This was not a case of merely providing a town with broadband so that they could surf the Web – the broadband network in Alston Moor is changing lives through the services it has empowered and the opportunities it enables.

Whereas the people of Alston Moor were once required to drive over 30 miles just to visit the nearest big hospital, the new broadband network paves the way for a ground-breaking e-health systems.

For vulnerable or elderly members of the community, remote monitoring equipment will be placed in their homes, reducing their need to travel and enabling the health service to have a continual check on their health status. This will save residents a great deal of time and money by cutting out nurses visits that are not required.

Now that nearly every home in the town has a computer, the town's schools saw an improvement in educational attainment. Lessons can be downloaded at home, allowing parents to see what their children are learning and giving pupils the chance to learn at their own pace.

In a perfect example of how broadband connectivity can empower people to change their economic status, one resident moved his business from the South East of England to Alston Moor. Due to the extremely low cost of office space and connectivity, he was able to cost-effectively run a global business from a refurbished farm. As the town became known for its exceptional and cost-effective broadband network, other businesses began to move into the area. As a result, over 25 new jobs have been created already – a significant number in a town of 2,500 people.

“The distance and terrain between Alston Moor and other towns caused more than just a physical separation – it prevented the deployment of traditional broadband, which created a significant economic separation as well.”

When we were evaluating technologies it became clear that UK Broadband's wireless broadband systems were the optimal solution.”

Daniel Heery,
Project Manager, Cybermoor



About us

UK Broadband is the UK's largest holder of national radio spectrum suitable for 4G mobile services and fixed wireless solutions.

We provide wireless data capacity, equipment, services and solutions to the telecoms industry, service providers, channel partners and the public sector.

For more information:

t +44 (0)20 3006 7795

e info@ukbroadband.com

www.ukbroadband.com