UFB, coming in like a storm!

By Felix Lee

Most of you should by now have heard of the ultra-fast broadband project or more commonly known as UFB. If you haven't it's the government's plan to bring superfast fibre internet to all the towns and cities in New Zealand. This means almost everyone living in this country would be able to access world leading internet by 2020. There are a few exciting recent developments which I will share here.

Build progress

The latest figures as at March 31 shows that UFB network is 46% complete, it has been rolled out to more than 618,000 users. This means the project is actually ahead of schedule and on budget which is pretty impressive.

Gigabit speeds

You can get gigabit UFB right now if you live in the central North Island, or Dunedin. Other areas are set to get it soon. Whangarei should get it this month, and Christchurch would be later this year. The rest of the country though, is covered by Chorus. Bigpipe currently have UFB in Auckland and Wellington. Chorus have said that they would roll it out nationwide within three years, but this could be sooner. We're on track to become one of the first countries to have gigabit available nationwide!

Just imagine the possibilities we can do with this; SuperHD TV, 3D printing, virtual presence, fully automated security and lighting systems all controlled by your phone via the internet. It'll also be a boost to the economy, we can export our technology all around the world and don't have to rely on selling milk powder any longer.

And there's no need to worry fibre will run out of capacity any time soon. You can put up to 96 different colours of lasers down a single fibre, each colour can support 100Gbps, and each house gets two strands of fibre. That's crazy amounts of bandwidth, and should last us a few decades at least.

Consents for UFB

One of the problems with getting UFB installed is that if you live down a shared driveway, you will need consent of everyone who share that driveway before you can have fibre connected. If one of your neighbours don't agree, then sorry you're not getting fibre. The government is currently looking at changing the law to make this easier. All the affected owners are notified of a pending install, and if they don't object then Chorus can go ahead. This should make the process easier and faster.

Another tricky and time consuming consents type is multi dwelling units such as apartments, townhouses or duplex's. Also known as MDU's, a number of consents are required for installation to occur. Body corporations, building managers, legal owners and agencies are all contributors to the consents process. The reason why this takes so long is due to gathering the consents and having everyone on the same page. Without all consents gained, Chorus cannot proceed with installations.

Although this is rare, most people, to include those tricky building corps are fully aware that UFB is the next generation of broadband in NZ. As copper lines begin to feel the strain, UFB is the only way forward.

UFB expansion

The coverage of UFB has recently been expanded from 75% to 80% of the population, so this means every town with a population exceeding a few thousand will be covered by UFB. The exact list of towns this cover would be announced later this year. The expanded UFB would be pretty similar to the existing UFB

rollout, the main difference is that users may have the option of choosing to connect using G.fast. This is where the fibre is connected to the kerb of each house, then the existing copper cabling is used to connect the rest of the way in. This means there's no need to dig up the driveway to install the fibre, should save a big of hassle.

Us Kiwi's are all collectively contributing $1.5 billion to the UFB project as taxpayers, so if it is rolled out to your place, get it! Remember to check out Bigpipe's amazing no-term-contract unlimited UFB plans! Check your address [here](). We now cover Wellington in addition to Auckland, and we hope to be cover the rest of the country soon!

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