**White Paper**

**Leased Lines**

Published by Connect it, 23rd January 2017

The premium level of connectivity – leased lines – used to be the sole preserve of large corporates, owing to the higher monthly cost of having a direct connection between the exchange and the client’s premises. However, as more businesses of all sizes rely increasingly heavily on stable, fast broadband connections, they are also installing leased lines, which means that the cost is reducing. There are also other important operational advantages to using this technology.

**Why should you switch to a leased line?**

In considering this option, think about the following four questions:

* Is your current broadband unreliable (outages, slowdowns, poor speeds, long wait for repairs)?
* Is reliable connectivity critical for your business?
* Does your business send commercially or personally sensitive data across the internet?
* Would your business lose money if it couldn’t access the internet?

If you answer ‘yes’ to any of these questions, perhaps the best thing your business can do this year is invest in a Leased line!

Chances are, you answered ‘yes’ to at least three of those questions. Business internet access has become a critical commodity, and the costs – both financial and reputational – associated with IT downtime are increasing every year.

The numbers speak for themselves:

* £494 - The annual cost of lost productivity due to downtime per employee.1 If you have 50 employees, that’s almost £25,000 of lost time per year.
* 44% - The amount of small businesses reporting increased information security increased information security spend.2
* £10.5bn - The estimated annual cost of downtime to the UK economy.3
* 74% - The percentage of businesses that have seen wider IT costs fall thanks to better connectivity.4

1One Poll study.
2UK Government and PwC survey.
3EMC Data Protection Index.
4BT.

**Six ways Leased Lines can save you money.**

Every time your business su­ffers through downtime, outages or sluggish broadband speeds, your business is potentially losing money in lost revenue (not to mention the money you’re spending on staff­ who can’t do anything when the internet is down).

Chances are, even a few half hours here and there have a real impact on productivity and revenue. But how much is a slow or even broken internet connection costing your business? A OnePoll study found that on average, employees lose 44 minutes every week due to poor broadband speeds and connectivity.

So, every year your business is losing a week’s worth of work (38 hours) per employee, all because of a poor internet connection. And that’s just the start of it.

**The real cost of slow internet and IT downtime.**

* 39% of employees say that their internet is ‘much faster’ at home compared to the internet they use at work.
* 10% of employees admit that they look for other jobs during prolonged periods of IT downtime (when they can’t work).
* 7% admitted that their work internet connection grinds to a halt more than 10 times in any given seven-day period.
* £11bn is lost every year by the UK economy, as a direct result of lost productivity - much of which is down to connectivity.
* £494 is lost every year in productivity costs due to slow internet – and this is for every employee a business has.
* 44 minutes is lost every week, per employee, due to poor connectivity. If you have 10 staff, that’s 7 hours lost each week.

**How Leased Lines could benefit your business.**

* **Increased productivity**Uncontended connections off­er the fastest speeds to keep your business working, plus symmetrical speeds are ideal for VoIP and more.
* **Security**A Leased Line is not shared with others, meaning your traffic is private. Fixed lines are the most secure way to communicate right now.
* **Guaranteed reliability**100% availability SLAs, optimum ‑x times and traffic redirection failover options ensure you have a constant, reliable connection.
* **Support**Leased Lines are backed with 24/7 support teams while vendors continuously monitor networks to detect failures, intrusions and attacks.
* **Scalability**
As Leased Lines are delivered over a high capacity carrier-grade backbone network, you can scale up as your business grows.

**Six ways Leased Lines can save your business money.**

**Improve protection against security breaches and downtime.**

A Leased Line is not shared with others, meaning your traffic is private. Fixed lines are the most secure way to communicate right now.

**Faster** **adoption of new technologies**

Leased Lines are not shared with others, meaning any information transmitted through them is private, and that’s a huge benefit for modern businesses - particularly when you consider the Information Commissioner’s Office fine of up to £500,000 for compromising personal data. Not only could you avoid fines if you handle customer information, but you could avoid the downtime associated with hacks and security breaches:

* 87% of small businesses reported at least one cyber breach in the last year.
* 60% of businesses in the UK reported downtime with 34% seeing a loss of revenue.

**Replace legacy hardware with scalable, hosted alternatives.**Leased Line costs suddenly look a lot more palatable when measured against the savings you could make through IP-based telephony. Leased Lines allow you to discard legacy phone systems, the associated maintenance and upgrade fees, in favour of scalable IP-based services that reduce costs and dramatically improve call quality (as well as featuring a range of business-ready features). According to recent research from BT:

* 74% of businesses have seen their IT costs fall thanks to faster internet.
* 22% of SMEs are using the internet for phone calls. Businesses using VoIP make an average yearly saving of £456.

**Use more cloud applications, taking advantage of more reliable connections.**

Cloud applications can make online collaborations easier and help you replace costly in-house systems. Flexible tools like Hosted Exchange and Skype for Business run on simple subscription models, while easy scalability means you can quickly add or remove users as required, so you’ll only ever pay for what you use. The cloud makes a big di­fference to your business, and 69% of businesses say fast internet helps them use it to its potential.

**Reduce travel costs by taking advantage of VoIP and online meeting software.**VoIP and online meeting software run extremely well using Leased Lines, meaning your teams (and you and your clients) can stay in touch easily whenever and wherever they are. This means you can cut down on the number of physical meetings, reducing travel fees and overheads and promoting productivity. Remote working is growing quickly in the UK, seeing a substantial growth in the last 1-2 years. Over 13% of the UK workforce5 used remote working in 2014.

5ONS 2014

**Improve and implement a comprehensive digital strategy.**
As a faster, more secure and more reliable form of connectivity, Leased Lines can improve and make it easier to implement your digital strategy. If you don’t have a digital strategy for your business, you should strongly consider putting one in place to help improve your enquiries, sales and customer relations. 2 out of 3 UK businesses think a digital strategy is critical for business success:

* 57% of UK businesses have had more enquiries thanks to their digital strategy.
* 50% of businesses in the UK say having a digital strategy has increased sales, and 29% say it has reduced costs.

**Improve business efficiency.**Reduced downtime, improved security, less time travelling or in meetings, better use of cloud applications and quicker working practices all contribute to making your business more efficient. This not only reduces costs, but allows you to devote more time to other areas, such as your online presence, networking, business planning or researching new technologies.

* 72% of UK businesses believe it is very important to keep up with new technologies.
* 69% say that keeping their website and/or social media channels running efficiently is crucial to their business success.

**Connect it can help!**

Connect it provide end-to-end communications services. We provision ADSL and VDSL connections, as well as Leased Lines for a wide range of clients. Our Leased Lines are fully managed and are supported by a 5-hour-fix SLA and 24/7 contactability. We specialise in cloud-hosted communications systems, which will make the most of your new leased line. If you would like to discuss your requirements, or are looking for any information on how to future-proof your telecoms, please contact us on 03456 885122 or info@connect-it.co. We’ll be in touch.