

RECORD UK CHRISTMAS INTERNET TRAFFIC

Submitted by: Smye Holland Associates

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The UK went on-line to a record extent over the Christmas holiday.

Internet and email use on Christmas Day and Boxing Day this year was substantially higher than on the same two days in 2003 - itself a record year - according to figures just released by the London Internet Exchange (LINX), the world's largest Internet exchange point.

Data traffic levels at LINX over the holiday were close to those of a normal weekend, showing that Internet use is increasingly part of daily life for many people.

The flow of Internet traffic through LINX facilities peaked at around 50 Gbit/second on Boxing Day and 45 Gbit/second on Christmas Day itself. This is more than double last year, when the peaks were 25 Gbit/second on Boxing Day and around 22 Gbit/second.

(Although a change in the way the figures are reported means that the two years are not directly comparable, the upward trend is a definite phenomenon).

LINX sales and marketing manager Vanessa Evans said: "It is impossible to tell from the traffic figures what exactly people were doing on the Internet. However, Christmas gifts and greetings, routine business use of the Internet which continues even through the holidays and the increasing internationalisation of the medium, all contributed to the rise in traffic.

"There is also a continuing increase in the number of households connected to the Internet, with just over half of homes in the UK now able to get on-line, and increasing numbers of them using broadband connection.

"Over the holiday period itself, people may have been sending e-mails to relatives overseas or logging onto websites. There were probably also many people using Christmas gifts - such as Internet-based games - for the first time."

Over the three December weekends prior to Christmas the peak traffic flows at LINX were around 62 Gbit/second.

END

Notes to editors:

1. London Internet Exchange (LINX) is the world's largest volume Internet hub and the UK's largest membership organisation for Internet service providers (ISPs). A non-profit organisation founded in 1994, it operates high-capacity switching facilities at eight London-based tele-hotels where its 170 members interconnect their networks to provide customers with rapid, cost-effective data transmission. LINX handles around 90 per cent of UK Internet traffic. For more information about LINX visit www.linx.net

2. One gigabit (Gbit) is 1,000 million bits of data. While Internet traffic consists of a wide variety of data, one gigabit is roughly equivalent to 60,000 average e-mail messages.

3. Traffic figures quoted above for Christmas 2004 are the combined peak daily flows over all LINX switches. Figures for Christmas 2003 were based only on traffic on LINX's public exchange. These under-state Internet traffic because they do not include the traffic on so-called 'private peering' connections where large ISPs exchange traffic directly. During 2004 LINX changed the way in which it reports traffic statistics in order to include the growing level of private peering traffic.

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