

# Technology Mile

## Question and Answers

### 1. What is the technology mile?

The Technology Mile provides free wireless internet access to local businesses, residents and visitors to Islington. It is the largest free hotzone in the U.K. and supports the A1 Borough project.

### 2. Where is the technology mile?

The Technology Mile runs for 4km from the Angel along Upper Street and Holloway Road to the Odeon Cinema.

These type of areas are regarded as 'canyons of coverage' where the wireless transmitters are located on lampposts below the height of the buildings either side of the street. This creates a linear coverage pattern extending from the Angel to the Odeon. It is possible that at some of the road junctions there is slight coverage at the beginning of the roads, which is a result of signal over-spill.

### 3. What technology is used?

Using StreetNet (a high-speed wireless internet service), low-powered transmitters are installed on the lampposts and in the iP kiosks along Upper Street to create "hotspots". Hotspots are then linked together to create "hotzones".

### 4. What is WiFi technology?

WiFi is a local area network that uses high frequency radio signals to transmit and receive data.

### 5. So I can just sit down anywhere with my laptop and connect to the web for free?

Yes, as long as you are within a StreetNet hotzone area and have a wireless-enabled PDA or laptop.

If you require instructions to log-on to the network, please e.mail: [streetnet@islington.gov.uk](mailto:streetnet@islington.gov.uk).

### 6. How many users log-on to StreetNet?

The usage of the service has increased week-on-week with 15,500 users each month currently logging on.

### 7. Are there plans to expand the project to other areas of Islington?

Yes, the service has been expanded into the Cannonbury ward New River Estate. Future expansion will again focus on social housing estates within the borough.

## **8. How does this project benefit the community?**

This will benefit the community by providing free access to the web, Council information and services, local information, weather up-dates, freemail and travel information.

## **9. What are the objectives of the Project?**

- Social Inclusion – bridging the digital divide.
- Deliver the council's vision of "One Islington." The four priorities of this vision are: regeneration, sustainability, performance improvement and customer focus.
- As part of the A1 Borough Project, improve the look and feel of this crucial route.
- Aid communication between the council, residents, workers and visitors to Islington.
- Provide opportunities for joint working with local businesses to improve the borough.
- Meet the e-government agenda by offering as many online services as possible to increase access and reduce inequality.

## **10. Who is funding the project?**

The project has been jointly funded by Islington Council and our implementation partners, Cityspace, who are urban digital network providers.

## **11. How much did the technology cost?**

All the costs of the service are shared through a partnership arrangement with the Council's private sector partner, Cityspace.

## **12. Why does the council think this project is a good idea?**

Islington Council is committed to finding ways to enable socially and digitally disadvantaged residents to take full advantage of the benefits made available to users of emerging technologies, such as the internet.

## **13. What services can be accessed from StreetNet?**

You can access the web, Council information and services, local information, weather up-dates, freemail and travel information.

## **14. I don't have a laptop or a PDA – how can I make use of the service?**

You can access the service at via PC terminals at:

- *Crypt Café*: St Marys Church Upper Street, Islington, N1.
- *Walter Sickert*: Community Centre Canonbury Crescent N1 2FB

### **15. Where else in London can I access this type of technology?**

There are hotspots throughout London but you have to pay for the service. Islington is the only area that has a “hotzone” with free internet access.

### **16. Who can use the technology?**

All residents, local businesses and visitors to Islington can use the technology via a wireless-enabled PDA or laptop.

### **17. Has this wireless project been a success?**

Performance has been solid with over 90% availability and usage is high.

The project has received plenty of recognition in the industry and was awarded runner up in both the CNet Networks Technology Project of the Year and in the Good Communications Awards sponsored by Sony in 2005.

### **18. How does the use of the technology address environmental, economic and/or social issues within the borough?**

**Environment:** As part of the A1 borough, the look and feel of the environment has been greatly improved. By its very nature, the wireless network itself has no visual impact on the street and blends seamlessly and invisibly into the environment. However, the visibility lies in the community accessing the network outside local cafés, sitting on park benches or walking along Upper Street

**Social:** With the focus on social inclusion, this project has begun to bridge the digital divide and offer disenfranchised members of the public the opportunity to benefit from emerging technologies and not to be left behind. By taking the technology to the people who stand to benefit the most and crucially giving them the tools to extract those benefits, we are making real progress in ensuring this vision is shared and owned by residents and partners and not just the council. In addition, it is providing everyone with the benefits that on-line services can provide e.g. up-to-date information, discounts and e-booking. These online benefits are particularly pertinent to the under-privileged members of the community.

**Economic:** Being recognised as the sixth most deprived authority in the country, Islington Council believes that technology has a vital role in reducing both economic and social disparities. By offering free internet access and kit, we feel this project has gone a long way in closing the gap between the privileged and less privileged groups of the community. People who may not otherwise have had the opportunity are using the technology to access information on benefits and entitlements as well as job vacancies and childcare information. This gateway has opened up new possibilities for economic betterment on both an individual and community level.