

SuperJANET III Launches Next Phase of the UK's Academic Network

UKERNA announce the next step in National Universities networking with this press release.

The United Kingdom Education and Research Networking Association (UKERNA) and Cable and Wireless Communications Services Ltd. have signed an agreement to replace the backbone of the UK's academic and research network (SuperJANET).

This is the third phase of the SuperJANET project and is aimed at consolidating the pioneering work of the previous two phases in meeting the key aim of the network: to provide the UK higher education and research community with a high quality and leading edge network to facilitate teaching and research. This new initiative will set the direction of the network to the millennium and beyond.

The replacement program, supported by funding by the Higher Education Funding Councils for England, Scotland and Wales and the Department for Education Northern Ireland, through their Joint Information Systems Committee, will ensure that the UK retains one of the fastest and most pervasive networks available to the worldwide higher education and research sector.

Under the agreement with Cable & Wireless, a SuperJANET backbone will use Asynchronous Transfer Mode technology to provide connections running at 155 million bits per second (Mbit/s) into a central ring of switching centres sited in London, Bristol, Manchester and Leeds. From this core the network will fan out at 155 or 34 Mbit/s to nodes located at the following centres:

- Belfast
- Birmingham
- Bristol
- Cambridge
- Cardiff
- Rutherford Appleton Laboratory (RAL)
- Edinburgh
- Exeter
- Leeds
- Newcastle
- Nottingham
- Manchester
- University of London Computer Centre (ULCC).

The emphasis will be on connecting from

these points to Metropolitan Area Networks (MANs) that have been developed under joint funding initiatives between the Higher Education Funding Councils and Higher Education Institutions in regions throughout England, Scotland and Wales. By this means, the benefits of SuperJANET will be brought to a wide range of institutions in the most cost-effective manner.

In addition to the installation of a new backbone, UKERNA has also reviewed its provision of SuperJANET to those institutions which are not connected to MANs due to geographical or other considerations. In such cases UKERNA will continue to use BT's Switched Multi-Megabit Data Service (SMDS) to provide access at bandwidths of 4 or 10 Mbit/s. As part of a successful collaboration with BT, the first phase of the SuperJANET project assisted in the bringing to market of the SMDS. Since then it has played a major and continuing role in SuperJANET.

Under the terms of the agreement with Cable & Wireless it will be possible to augment the basic provisions of the backbone to accommodate requirements by individual institutions and projects for additional bandwidth or facilities on a basis of individual charging where these requirements exceed the service levels funded through the JISC. UKERNA looks forward to working with its colleagues in the academic sector in developing such bespoke solutions.

Dr Bob Day, Network Services Director at UKERNA, said: "A broad-band SuperJANET network is vital to the whole academic process, especially as an infrastructure to support research and the increasing number of distance learning applications. Cable & Wireless Communications offered us a reliable solution that both meets our present needs and offers us a means to develop further the leading edge services which we provide to the higher education and research community."

Further information on this and other aspects of SuperJANET may be found on the World Wide Web at URL: http://www.ja.net/press_release/SJ-Brief.html