

Telkom to discontinue ADSL services: Where to next?

It's officially happening. Telkom is discontinuing its copper line based ADSL service, potentially leaving many home and small-to-medium enterprise (SME) users at a loose end.



John Woollam, CEO at Euphoria Telecom

So, where should these subscribers go next and why are they cutting the copper cord anyway? Well, it's all in the name of progress. And upgrading at this stage is simply a logical step.

"DSL was a necessary evil that was hugely problematic and unreliable, largely due to cable theft. That said, it served us well as it could for a long time. But technology is something that is, by its very nature, in a constant state of flux," says John Woollam, CEO at Euphoria Telecom.

“ We live in a world where communication happens in milliseconds. And more remote work means that things are happening less in the real world and more in the cloud. Speed and reliability are more important than ever. And the fact is, DSL just doesn't cut it anymore. ”

Fibre is fast becoming the global internet connectivity standard. And when you compare it to ADSL, it's easy to see why. ADSL transmits data via telephone lines along copper cables. The further away your home or office is from the telephone exchange that is sending the signal, the slower your internet is likely to be. Speed can also easily be affected by high traffic volume.

Fibre internet, on the other hand, transmits data using fibre optic cable. And the distance from your house or office to the exchange doesn't affect the speed. Fibre is also built to handle more traffic without slowing down.

Telkom migrates customers from copper to fibre-based internet

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In terms of data transfer speed by the numbers, fibre can theoretically hit speeds of up to 10 000 Mbps (10 Gbps) – though that kind of speed is not available on a standard commercial line (yet). The fastest ADSL lines were said to achieve speeds of up to 40 Mbps – though this was rarely the case in practice – and 10 Mbps was more common.

Faster fibre lines are more expensive. But they are likely to become more affordable as our upload and download requirements continue to evolve. For home users, pricing is far from prohibitive. And for the added value fibre delivers, it's a worthwhile investment.

So, while fibre may not be the phone line or internet you're used to, it makes a fair amount of sense to upgrade in a world that is becoming more interconnected by the day. Woollam continues: "Fibre is much less prone to downtime than any of its predecessors and it offers a world of choice in Voice Over Internet Protocol (VoIP) telephone solutions and more modern ways of working.

"As more companies migrate to cloud-based systems like G Suite from Google Cloud, Microsoft 365 and similar alternatives, workflows are being streamlined and drastically sped up. Of course, we're also at the peak of a global pandemic, which has forced the world into various levels of lockdown. And meetings now happen less in the boardroom than they do over Zoom or Microsoft Teams. Wouldn't it be great if that video didn't freeze all the time?"

ADSL gave us our first taste of fast internet. We salute it for making streaming easier and downloads less laborious. We honour its legacy and we are grateful for the many good years it brought internet users. But the time has come to say farewell and move on to the newer, faster model; because the road to the future is lined with fibre optic cable, not copper.

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