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The UK's independent focus for next generation broadband transformation as an essential foundation for economic growth, innovation and easier development.

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NG Events Ltd produces unique, high quality conferences, events and study tours including - now in its 6th year - NextGen 13. NG Events Ltd is directed by Marit Hendriks and Andrew Macdonald.

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NextGen Blog

News Release 17 November 2011, Bristol, UK
17 November 2011

Broadband Investment and Affordability Critical to Transforming Lives and Societies

Cybermoor, E2BN and University of Edinburgh named winners of first ever NextGen Challenge recognising projects delivering viable broadband access

Broadband at prices people and countries can afford is the next critical factor in delivering a world where next generation access can truly transform lives and societies. This was one of the key messages from this year's NextGen national conference and exhibition, held at the University of the West of England Conference Centre in Bristol.

The event attracted a record number of speakers and visitors with an increasing international focus, as highlighted by contributions from Neelie Kroes, Vice President of the European Commission, and Suvi Linden, the United Nations' Commissioner for Broadband Digital Development.

Linden, formerly Minister of Communications for Finland, was instrumental in making broadband a legal right for all Finnish citizens and at this year's event she stressed the need for global government funding in order to make broadband access affordable for all.

In her address focussing on Europe as a whole, Kroes was also keen to highlight the need for continued investment.

"Just over one in four Europeans has still never had access to the internet at all and compared to our international competitors we fall behind on providing fast fibre networks," she said.

"We need investment across Europe; \$180 to \$270 billion Euros worth in fact. The internet is an economic essential for everyone from businesses, small and large, to academia and the creative industries. Fast broadband is the digital oxygen allowing this ecosystem to thrive and grow."

Kroes also covered the European Commission's work around telecoms regulations to encourage investment and competition in delivering next generation solutions amid a safe and potentially profitable market.

In addition to a host of speakers from industry leading organisations, including Fujitsu, Prysmian Group, Thales, Arqiva, BT and the FTTH Council Europe, at the conference, the first ever NextGen Challenge awards also took place. The awards showcased the best in next generation digital access infrastructure innovation and recognised the achievements of organisations developing and deploying better broadband.

The University of Edinburgh was one of three organisations to be named a winner during the ceremony in Bristol hosted by Councillor Geoffrey Gollop – The Right Honourable Lord Mayor of Bristol. It won the Rural Leadership and Community Development category for its Tegola wifi network project, which focused on building a cheap, fast and reliable communications network in remote areas.

Cybermoor was also successful, winning the Innovative Funding accolade for its network delivery solutions for the sparsely populated parish of Alston Moor in England. Finally, E2BN's

Connecting Schools project claimed top spot in the Collaborative Advantage award, having embarked on a project to provide a robust infrastructure for high speed, affordable broadband across schools in the East of England.

Marit Hendriks, organiser of NextGen 11, said: “We received a high level of entries for the NextGen Challenge and what these winning organisations have demonstrated is a real commitment to the future of broadband access. They have shown what is possible with coordinated efforts and how practical and affordable solutions can be implemented to target areas less likely to attract large scale ISP funding.”

ENDS

NextGen Challenge winners and runner ups by category:

Rural Leadership and Community Development

Winner: Tegola wifi network entered by University of Edinburgh

Runner up: Rural Connect - Broadband Access to Communities entered by NYnet Ltd

Innovative Funding Category

Winner: Cybermoor Networks entered by Cybermoor

Runner up: ClacksMax entered by Clackmannanshire Council

Collaborative Advantage Category

Winner: Connecting Schools entered by E2BN

Runner up: Superfast Cornwall entered by Superfast Cornwall

About NextGen:

NextGen is the UK's premier platform for knowledge transfer about digital access network investment and management. The NextGen 11 programme included four roadshows across the UK and a two-day NextGen11 conference and exhibition. This is the 4th year for the NextGen programme.

NextGen is directed by Marit Hendriks and Andrew Macdonald under license from the Community Broadband Network (CBN). NG Events Ltd trading as NextGen is a not for profit initiative and is technology and supplier neutral. For more details, sponsors and supporters, see www.nextgenevents.co.uk.

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What we do

Through our events - independent of suppliers and technologies - we bring together partners, suppliers, investors and stakeholders - sharing knowledge and creating new opportunities.

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