Bringing it all together

BT's Sustainability Report 2008

Inclusive society

let's make a better world

An inclusive society

Communications technology can promote social inclusion, by giving individuals and communities the opportunity to participate in the global economy. Unfortunately millions of people still lack access to, and the skills to use, technology.

Contributing to a more inclusive society, where the benefits of communications technology are widely shared, is a key part of our CSR strategy.

This section covers our approach:

- Our inclusive society strategy
- Making our technology widely available
- Designing inclusive products and services
- Increasing affordability
- Building the capability of excluded people to use technology.

Other aspects of our inclusion strategy are covered elsewhere in this report, including: Diversity and inclusive workplace practices; Global sourcing; and Flexible working at BT.

Our inclusion strategy

Our goal is to use enhanced communications to help create a fairer, more inclusive society where everybody has the opportunity to participate, benefit and contribute. We do this through our business practices and many of our community investment programmes.

Our inclusion strategy includes:

- Increasing access through better availability, design and affordability
- Increasing skills for individuals to communicate and collaborate effectively
- Role modelling inclusive behaviour in BT and with suppliers and customers. Our inclusive workforce policies are one of the ways we do this.
- Using enhanced communications to help charities, the young and the disadvantaged. For example through our UNICEF partnership.
- Increasing awareness of the social benefits of enhanced communications
- Promoting opportunities for community engagement that create social change (eg volunteering)

Many of our inclusive society programmes are delivered in partnership with charities and other organisations.

In October 2005, data from the UK Office of National Statistics (ONS) showed that 36% of adults had not accessed the internet in the last three months. We have set a target to reduce this percentage by 10% (to less than 32.4%) by 31 March 2010. The most recent ONS data shows that in August 2007, 33% of adults had not accessed the internet in the last three months.

Whilst many of our inclusion programmes are focused within the UK, we are increasing our support for inclusion activities internationally, particularly in emerging markets.

Governance

Jane Hobbs, Director HR for BT Openreach, sponsors our inclusive society programme. A taskforce has been set up to agree objectives and drive progress. Members include representatives from our major lines of business and central functions including human resources and BT's Chief Technology Office.

Advocacy

BT is a core member of the Alliance for Digital Inclusion. This is an industry body which promotes the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) to help improve social inclusion and community regeneration. This year, the ADI held a series of workshops on telecare/ telehealth, measuring the impact of digital inclusion, and virtual learning environments.

Availability

In the UK we can help increase digital inclusion by providing a range of different connections, at home, in the office or on the move and by making these widely available.

In this section we explain our approach to:

- Broadband and WiFi
- Payphones
- Developing online content and services that benefits communities
- BT Community Connections award scheme

BT Community Connections

We support increased availability through the BT Community Connections programme. This is an award scheme for voluntary and community groups that could benefit from internet access but don't have the resources to pay for it. It provides equipment and a contribution towards a year's broadband access.

So far the Community Connections scheme has:

- Enabled over 5,500 groups to get online, from older 'silver surfers' to youth groups, cultural organisations, environmental initiatives and sports clubs
- Benefited an estimated six million people
- Won both the Business to Community category and the Overall Sponsorship award at the European Sponsorship Awards 2007
- Won a prestigious Business in the Community Award for Excellence 'BIG TICK'

Feedback from Award winners has been very positive:

"The award has made a huge difference to our team and all of the families that we support. The best part is that we didn't just get a PC (which is brilliant) but we were helped with installation and training which shows that you understand the problems of small community groups and our total absence of an IT department."

Broadband and WiFi

High-speed broadband provides a fast, always available connection to the internet via a conventional telephone line. We believe that use of broadband enabled services helps to reduce social exclusion. By 2015, the productivity benefits of broadband could result in UK Gross Domestic Product being up to £21.9 billion higher than it would otherwise have been, according to the Centre for Economic and Business Research.

More than 99.8% of UK homes and businesses are connected to broadband-enabled exchanges.

The challenge is to encourage more people to recognise the benefits of broadband, particularly those individuals who have most to gain from being able to use the technology

Broadband speeds
Broadband speeds are set to increase with the roll out of our 21st Century Network. This will apply across the UK, not just in city centres. Speeds of up to 24Mb/s will be increasingly available, although actual speeds will depend on a variety of factors including distance from the exchange.

WiFi
BT Openzone provides public wireless Broadband access to the internet at over two thousand premium locations, in the UK. We have also developed Wi-Fi coverage extensively across 12 UK city centres, including Westminster, Newcastle and Birmingham.

Payphones

BT has a legal duty – known as our Universal Service Obligation – to make basic telephone services available to all UK consumers throughout the country and at affordable prices. This includes an obligation to provide payphones to meet the reasonable needs of end - users.

In Great Britain, we currently have 61,662 public payphones in operation, with a further 14,980 managed payphones. There are 1,673 public payphones and 996 managed payphones in Northern Ireland.

Calls from payphones have fallen considerably in recent years, mainly due to increased mobile use. Many payphones are now unprofitable to maintain. During 2008, we removed 492 public payphones. In all cases, local authority consultation was undertaken in line with Ofcom guidelines on kiosk removals.

Content that benefits communities

We provide content on our own websites to benefit communities, small businesses and individuals and we help other organisations to do the same. This can help to increase internet use among excluded groups. Here are a few examples:

- Charities – We work with Recipero Limited to provide free, simple-to-build websites to UK schools, charities and community groups. More than 5,100 organisations have benefited so far. See our case study for an example of how this has helped Morley Archives.
- Netmums – Netmums websites, supported by BT, provide local and general information for mothers looking after children, including contacts for new friends, where to find a toddlers' group and help on returning to work.
- British Sign Language – We have produced a British Sign Language (BSL) guide to broadband and the benefits it offers. We are the first major UK company to provide a BSL section on our website.
- Plain language guides – Some people find using the internet difficult, perhaps because of worries about learning something new, the cost or because they have a disability. We provide information on computers and accessories to help people overcome these problems. See Publications.

- For information on how we are putting the UK's leading arts collection online see Arts for All. See BT's Heritage Collection to read about how we are making the history of communications available online.

International efforts
We also promote digital inclusion in the developing world by providing content and services that benefit communities. For example, our LifeLines project in India is a phone-based information service providing important veterinary and agricultural information to rural farmers. Farmers dial the LifeLines number, often using a community telephone, and record their question on an automated message system. Over 98% of questions are answered within 24 hours with information from a panel of experts

Since it was launched in November 2006, we extended coverage so that an estimated 2 million farmers from 700 villages in regions of northern India can access the service. On average, 350 calls to the service are received each day, far exceeding initial expectations.

In December 2007, we extended our LifeLines India programme to provide a new education service. Teachers and higher grade students in the rural area of West Bengal are supported by a panel of subject-matter and teaching experts who answer queries on curriculum, subject content and classroom management issues.

Case study
Preserving the history of Morley

This year we helped the volunteer group Morley Archives to get online. The group works to preserve the rich heritage of Morley, a historic town in the UK.

Morley Archives was recently bequeathed a collection of photographs of the town by local historian David Atkison but did not have the money or resources to publish the collection. BT provided free web hosting to enable the group to display the photographs and to tell the story of the town online. As well as enabling people around the world to see the photos, the collection is now preserved electronically.

The site has helped to raise awareness of the town and is used by historians, students, and the media.

Design and customer service

Accessible product design and customer service help more people benefit from communications, particularly the elderly and people with disabilities.

Accessibility is good for our customers and our business. One in four customers in the UK are disabled or have a close friend or relative that is disabled; and nearly half of our retail customers are over 45 and 23% are retired.

We believe BT can add most value by making accessibility a consideration in all product design. We aim to improve access right across our core product range, rather than focussing on specialist accessibility products.

In this section we discuss;

- Our approach
- Inclusive design in BT
- How we engage with stakeholders

Our approach

We have had an Age & Disability Team since 1984, to champion accessible product design within BT and work with local communities to improve access to communications.

In the 2008 financial year we reviewed our approach to ensure we are putting customers at the heart of what we do and embedding accessibility across our product range.

We established a new Consumer Affairs and Inclusion team to lead our inclusion strategy in BT Retail. Their work will cover two main areas:

- Digital Inclusion
- Inclusive Design

Our goal is for BT to be recognised as a communications provider with a first class track record of delivery for older and disabled customers and a forward thinking approach to inclusion which enables the benefits of the digital age to be shared more widely.

Inclusive design

In 2007, we set up a centre of excellence to support inclusive design at BT Retail. The centre's role is to ensure that inclusivity issues are thought about at the outset of the design process and that our teams have the tools and support they need to make all BT products as inclusive as possible.

This year, over 130 BT Retail product managers were trained on inclusive design. The training covered all aspects of inclusive design and was led by some of the UK's leading organisations in the field, including the University of Cambridge Engineering Design School and Sagentia, a technology consultancy.

We also launched an inclusive design toolkit, developed in partnership with i~design (a business and academic consortium). This is publicly available at www.inclusivedesigntoolkit.com. The toolkit explains the benefits of inclusive design and provides guidance for product designers within BT and other businesses. It includes an "exclusion calculator" to help product teams understand how they can increase the potential market for a particular product by considering customers with reduced capabilities. We developed a computer based training programme for BT employees based on the new toolkit in order to raise awareness of the business case for inclusive design.

We are using the toolkit to increase awareness of inclusive design amongst the next generation of product designers. The toolkit was publicly launched at New Designers, a leading graduate design event. We also supported the RSA's Inclusive Worlds programme, a design competition to reduce the number of people excluded from everyday products and services. Our inclusive design toolkit is available as a resource for competition entrants.

The toolkit received over 1.3 million hits in the first nine months after its launch.

Mainstream products
We aim to incorporate accessible features into our main product range. The BT Converse 1200 corded phone is one example. It has an incoming call flashing light and a speech amplifier for people who are hard of hearing; quick speed dials prominently positioned for people with poor eyesight; and a hands free function for anyone with dexterity problems.

By encouraging new concepts, ideas and innovation, we are exploring how accessibility features can be included in our mainstream products. Some recent examples include:

- TwoTone Phone - designed for BT by the Helen Hamlyn Centre, to help older people contact their friends and relatives more easily. The phone has six 'presence' buttons that light up when friends and family are online. Users can then dial without needing to input a long telephone number and speak to a person first time, rather than connecting to an answering service.
- BT Balance - is a motion sensing laptop that allows users to manipulate menus and applications without the need for a keyboard or a mouse.

Inclusive products
We also have a number of products with inclusive features suitable for people with disabilities. These include:

- The BT Big Button 100 - a development of the original phone launched in 1998 with an easy-grip handset and larger keys that help elderly customers and those with limited mobility.
- TextDirect - which enables people with hearing impairments to have real-time telephone conversations with anyone they choose.
- The cordless Freestyle 6300 - with larger buttons and an amplification button for people with visual or hearing impairments, who require the convenience of a cordless phone.

Publications
We publish guidance on accessibility issues and information on suitable products and services from BT on our Inclusion website. For example:

- Communications Solutions – our guide to the full range of BT products with accessibility features
- Sound Connections Guide - our guide to hearing better on the phone
- The Internet: It's easier than you think – our guide encouraging people to get online.

Engagement on accessibility

We seek to understand customer accessibility requirements and raise awareness of these across BT.

External engagement
We have long-standing relationships with many consumer advocacy bodies including the National Consumer Council, Citizen's Advice Bureau, Ofcom and specialist age and disability organisations.

We are starting to take a more proactive approach in our interactions with these key stakeholder groups so that we can better understand the needs of the people that they represent. This will help to ensure that customer feedback and accessibility requirements are fed into our product design processes.

Through our digital inclusion projects we work with partners to help older people and disadvantaged communities and individuals gain ICT skills they can use to improve their lives. See Capability.

Please see our stakeholder engagement section for our approach with other stakeholders.

Internal engagement
It is important that accessibility and inclusion are considered in all aspects of our customer experience from product development, to advertising and the service provided by our contact centres.

Our Consumer Affairs and Inclusion team is responsible for raising awareness of accessibility issues across BT. Channels currently include:

- An inclusion intranet site providing guidance and background information for employees
- Our main online news service, BT Today

We have set up an Inclusion Communications Forum which has representatives from across BT, to co-ordinate initiatives and improve awareness of inclusion activities.

Capability

Technology gives people the opportunity to improve their lives. For example, using the internet, people can apply for jobs and government services, shop and keep in touch with friends and family.

Despite widespread availability, many people in the UK still do not use the internet and other new communications technology. Research such as the UK Online Centre's "Digital Inclusion, A discussion of the evidence base" report (July 2007), shows that lack of skills, confidence and motivation can act as barriers to the effective use of ICT.

Through our digital inclusion projects we work with partners to help older people and disadvantaged communities and individuals gain ICT skills they can use to improve their lives.

Our contribution is important but on our own we cannot hope to reach all the people in need of assistance. We aim to increase our impact by working in partnership, developing projects that are sustainable and replicable by others, and by raising awareness of the role of ICT in promoting inclusion.

We support other organisations doing similar work through our sponsorship of the eWell-Being awards. These awards, run by the sustainable development charity UK CEED as part of their SustainIT initiative, celebrate the social, economic and environmental benefits of ICT.

We also promote inclusive design in our products and services.

Community projects

People on low incomes are less likely to benefit from communications technology. Data from "The Internet in Britain 2007" report by Oxford Internet Surveys shows that people in the highest income category are more than twice as likely to use the Internet (91%) than those in the lowest income category (39%). We work with partners to improve access to technology in disadvantaged communities.

Everybody Online

BT has supported the EverybodyOnline project since 2002. Run by the charity Citizens Online, this programme is designed to help disadvantaged communities and individuals across the UK use digital technology.

Project officers in local communities work full-time to promote digital inclusion. They develop a network of local access points, learning programmes, partner organisations and volunteers.

During the last year, four new projects were launched: in Edinburgh, the City of London, Andover and a county wide project in Dorset. This brings the total number of active projects to thirteen. The projects:

- Enabled 12,000 people to attend sessions to try out new technology in locations where they feel comfortable
- Helped almost 5,000 of these to significantly improve their skills
- Developed local networks, bringing in over 150 new volunteers
- Helped 75 people into employment, saving an estimated £670,000 in state benefits
- Developed projects in art, music and multimedia to engage people in ICT using the things that matter to them
- Achieved growth in internet use in project areas above the national average

The European Commission have included a best practice case study highlighting the achievements of Everybody Online projects in their European e-Inclusion Initiative (see page 42).

Crossing the divide

Our work with Citizens Online has shown us that lack of confidence is one of the main barriers to digital inclusion.

BT is running a trial with participants across the UK to better understand the 'fear factor' for people who are daunted by the prospect of using computers or accessing the internet for the first time. Individuals have been given the technology and support to help overcome these fears.

Participants are recording their experiences throughout the process and the findings will be shared with policy makers, charities and other businesses. We hope this will improve understanding of the barriers to access and help organisations bring the benefits of the internet to more people across the UK.

See Crossing the Divide for more information.

Helping older and disabled people

Older people

Data from the Office of National Statistics suggests that 71% of people aged 65 and over have never used the internet. Many older people don't realise the potential benefits of ICT or are concerned that they lack the skills to use it.

We have been working with the charity Age Concern since 2005 to help older people get online, learn about new technologies and use ICT to improve their quality of life.

Recognising the importance of working collaboratively with other organisations, for instance training providers, Age Concern has developed a Digital Inclusion Network. Since it was launched in 2006, more than 60,000 older people have been trained by network members, of whom 42% were first time learners.

BT has provided more than £100,000 funding for grants which have been awarded to network members, to support 67 digital inclusion projects. This has had a direct impact on the lives of 2,874 older people, 70% of whom were using computers for the first time.

In the 2008 financial year, BT also supported Silver Surfer Week, to promote ICT to older people, and the Silver Surfer of the Year Awards.

Bridging generations
Young people often have excellent internet skills. Our BT Internet Rangers website was designed with the help of young people, to pass on their knowledge to adults. The site contains various guides, support materials and activities that make being an internet teacher fun for children of all ages.

We also organise Internet Ranger Days, where relatives visit schools to learn from children how to use the internet.

We supported an awards ceremony at the Houses of Parliament in 2007 to recognise the Internet Ranger and Silver Surfer of the year, and raise the profile of these two initiatives.

Helping people with disabilities
There are approximately 1.5 million people in the UK with a communication impairment and up to 600,000 of them cannot communicate verbally at all without specialist equipment. BT has been working with disability charity, Scope, to help develop communication devices to give them a voice.

Project Wheeltop was set up to design a communication device for a student at Beaumont College who was able to use voice automated technology through moving just one knee. The Wheeltop device works like a laptop on a wheelchair and allows much greater communication through text and e-mail. Two BT apprentices who have cerebral palsy are also contributing to this three year project.

Affordability

Cost is one factor that affects take-up of technology. At BT we aim to be the best provider of communications services for everybody in the UK - including those on low incomes.

This section explains;

- our phone services for low income customers,
- our policy on direct debit payments and
- our approach to disconnections.

Low income customers

Phone services
A phone service can act as a lifeline. We provide a basic telephone service for everyone, including people on low incomes or those who have trouble paying their bills.

On 30th April 2007 we launched BT Basic, for new customers, a low-cost line rental scheme designed to help customers on low incomes who would otherwise have difficulty affording a home phone service. The scheme is currently running along with Light User Scheme and In Contact Plus. We will contact customers on these schemes about moving to the new service during 2008.

Features include:

- Very clear pricing for all phone costs to helping customers budget.
- An automated ‘Call My Bill’ service which tells customers how much they have spent since their last bill.
- Premium Rate Call Barring service.

Other services for low-income customers include BT Pay & Call, a 'pay as you go' service. It provides a BT fixed line service which is pre-paid by credit or debit card or by using BT's Pay & Call Payment Card (cash payments at PayPoint). Around 50,000 customers use the service.

Charges for non-direct debit payment
BT customers who choose not to pay their bill by direct debit pay an additional £1.50 per month. These charges were introduced for a number of reasons. Non-direct debit payments cost BT substantially more to process on average and there is a much higher risk that customers will either pay late or forget to pay a bill. BT's payment processing fee for non-direct debit customers is not applied to customers on special packages for those on low incomes.

We believe this approach supports our aim to be the operator which offers customers the widest choice of payment options. Our leading competitors either only accept customers who pay by direct debit or charge them a heavier premium (up to £5 a month).

Disconnections
We regard a disconnection as a failure and make every effort to avoid it. We offer flexible payment options to help customers budget for bill payment. If customers have temporary payment difficulties, we are eager to work with them

to avoid having to disconnect their service. For example, by agreeing payment plans to help customers pay over a longer period than usual.

If we do not receive payment after issuing the first reminder, we will give the customer a second reminder, usually by telephone. If we still do not receive payment, or have been unable to agree a payment plan, we restrict the customer's service to incoming calls only (except for calls to BT and emergency numbers). We only consider temporarily disconnecting the service from outgoing and incoming calls if payment is still not forthcoming or we are unable to negotiate a realistic payment plan with the customer.

Our Bill Payment Code of Practice describes our procedures for requesting payment and the help customers can expect if they have problems paying.

For more information, see BT Customer Service

Inclusive Society - Key Performance Indicators

Indicator	Description	Measure	Target
Customer Service (See Note 1)	A measure of satisfaction across BT's entire customer base	Increase in right first time performance of 9% for the 2008 financial year.	To improve customer service in line with the corporate scorecard and to achieve an even greater year on year improvement in Right First Time (RFT) (See note 2)
UK Internet Usage	% of UK population who have not used the internet in the past three months.	33% of UK people digitally excluded.	To reduce the percentage of people who are digitally excluded by 10% (i.e. to 32.4%) by 31 March 2010

Note 1: Revenue weighted.
Note 2: Customer service is defined as - Right First Time' (keeping our promises) and 'Cycle Time' (the speed at which we deliver service). In 08/09 The Group target will be focused on Right First Time.

Inclusive Society Targets

Start Date	End Date	Description	Update	Target Status
April 2008	**March 2009**	BT will provide a minimum of 1% of our 2006 financial year UK pre-tax profits to activities in support of society, either through direct funding or through support in kind		New
April 2007	**March 2010**	BT will work with relevant organisations in the public, private and charity sector to reduce the percentage of people who are digitally excluded by 10% (i.e. to 32.4%) over a three year period, commencing in 2007.	The target requires a reduction in the UK percentage of people digitally excluded to 32.4% by March 2010. We have been actively progressing our own programmes and working closely with national, regional and local government agencies, the 3rd sector and, in some cases, other corporates, to address digital inclusion and are well on the way to target achievement.	On Target

Our inclusion strategy - Key Performance Indicators

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Community contribution	A measure of our investment in society	During the 2007 financial year BT provided 1.02% of its profits in funding and support in kind.	Maintain a minimum investment of 1% of pre-tax profits.
UK Internet Usage	% of UK population who have not used the internet in the past three months.	33% of UK people digitally excluded.	To reduce the percentage of people who are digitally excluded by 10% (i.e. to 32.4%) by 31 March 2010

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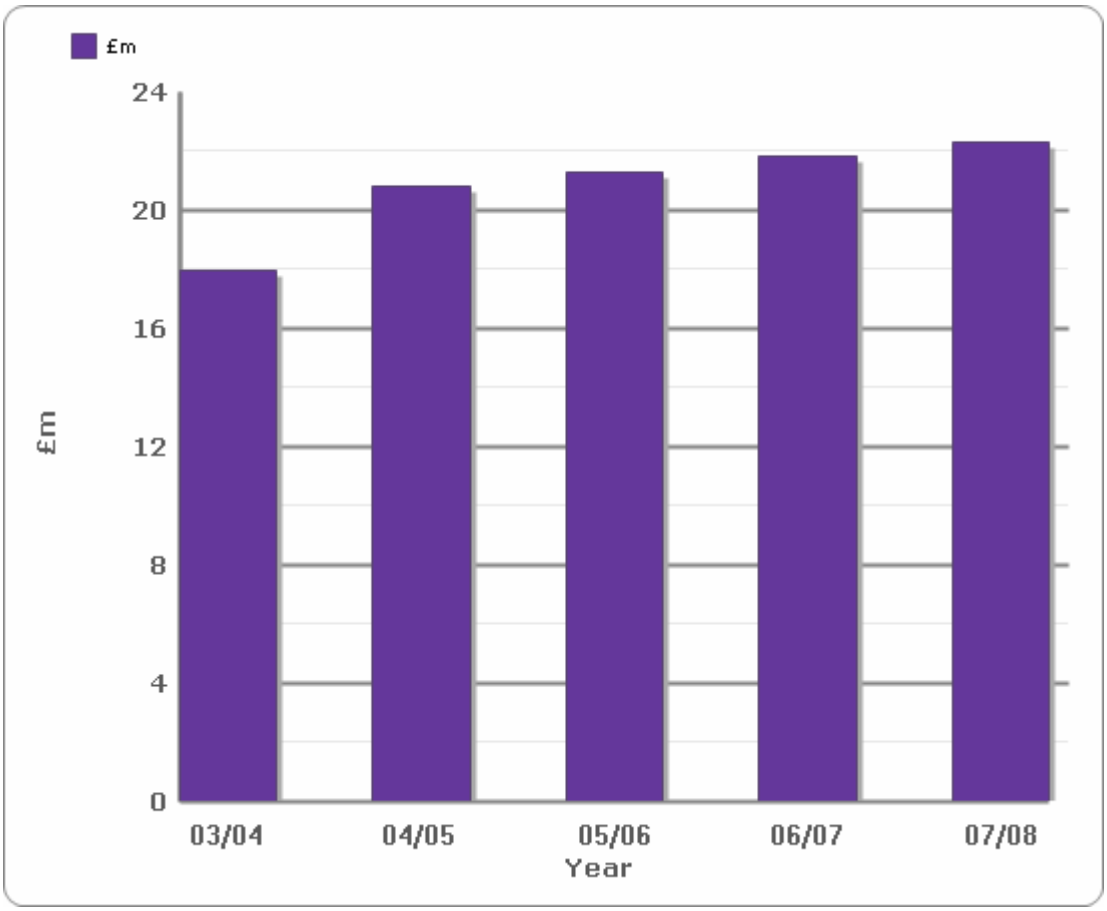
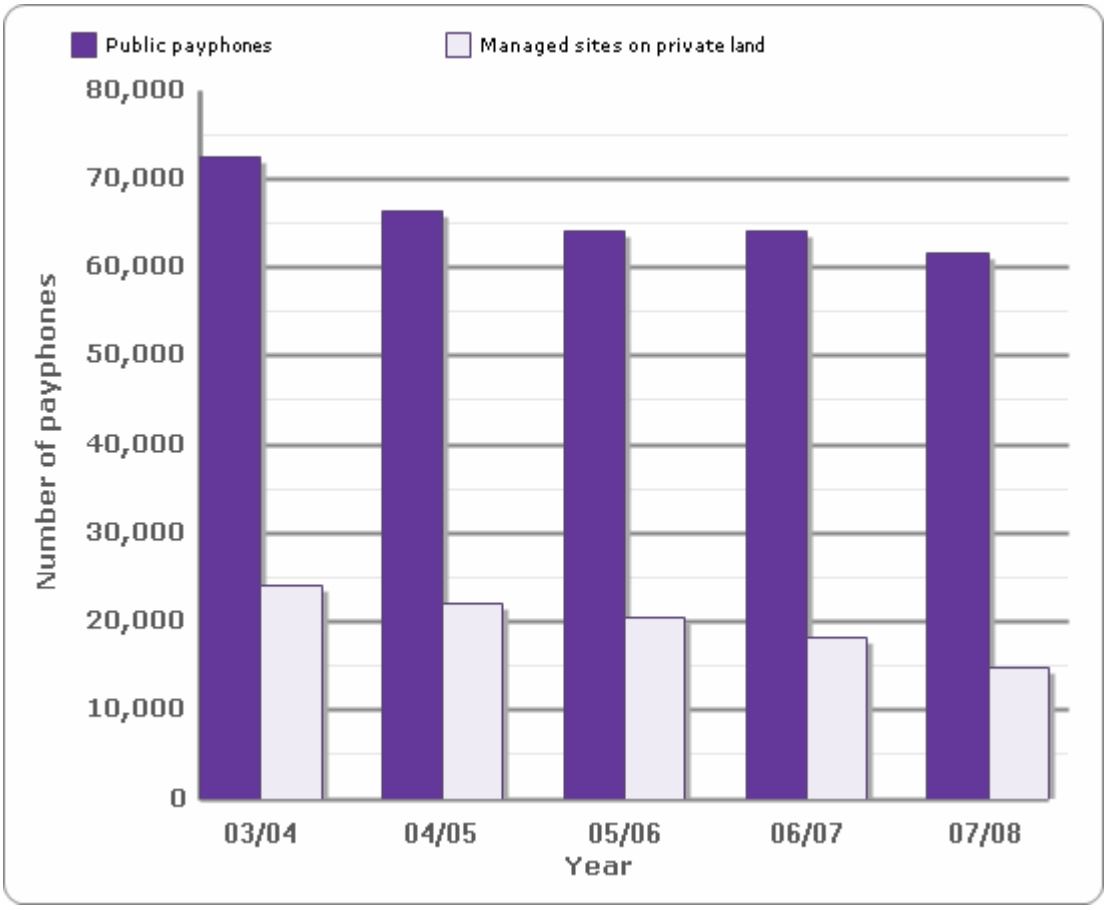
April 2007	**March 2008**	BT will improve customer service in line with the corporate scorecard target as overseen by the Board remuneration committee.	This year we achieved an increase in our 'right first time' performance of 9% against a target of 11%. Looking forward to 08/09, our target is to achieve an even greater year on year improvement.	Failed

Investment in Society - Funding and support in kind



Payphones



Excluding NI