



DC17-274

27 June 2017

FREE ULTRAFAST WI-FI, PHONE CALLS AND DIGITAL SERVICES LAUNCH IN LONDON

InLink from BT: Innovative digital street units to replace payphones

New digital street units providing ultrafast speeds of up to one gigabit per second (1Gbps) to Londoners - the UK's fastest free public Wi-Fi service available – as well as free phone calls and a range of new free digital services, have been switched on today.

The first of these new units, called *InLinks*, which will replace some of BT's existing payphones in the capital, have appeared on Camden High Street in London, thanks to a new partnership between BT, Intersection - the company behind LinkNYC, and Primesight - a leading UK outdoor advertising company.

The new InLinkUK from BT service will start to be rolled out to other high streets in London and major cities throughout the country this year.

Hundreds of users within range of an *InLink* will be able to access free ultrafast Wi-Fi on the move, with speeds of up to 1Gbps - the fastest free public Wi-Fi service available.

Other services available from the *InLinks* will include free UK landline and mobile phone calls, mobile device charging, access to maps, directions and local services, and a new BT Phone Book app enabling users to search for businesses by type and name, as well as people by name.

InLinks' digital displays will feature real-time information, such as tube service updates, weather forecasts, and community messaging.

All *InLink* services are free of charge to users and taxpayers as the project is funded by advertising revenue generated by the *InLinks'* digital displays.

The *InLink* design takes up less space on the street than a traditional payphone and will be installed in smaller numbers than the existing payphones they replace, freeing up space on pavements.

London is the second city to benefit from the innovative units, following the launch of LinkNYC last year. Since the first units were switched on in New York City in January 2016, over 1.8 million users have registered to use the Wi-Fi service.

Gerry McQuade, CEO, BT Wholesale & Ventures, said: "This is the phone box of the future. InLinkUK from BT brings the payphone up-to-date and gives people the services they need and use every day in the 21st century - and the bonus is it's all for free."

“But as well as the free services - ultrafast Wi-Fi, phone calls, rapid mobile charging and local information – councils and community organisations will be able to use the screens to provide up-to-the minute news and information to local residents.

“And just as the phone box has evolved, the new *InLinks* could evolve to use the internet of things, with connected sensors to monitor and help us understand and improve our environment.”

Matt Bird, general manager, InLinkUK, said: “*InLinks* introduce the technology we need to create a better urban environment. *InLink*’s in the future will feature sensors to capture real-time environmental data, such as pollution and traffic conditions, never seen before in the UK at such a micro level.

“*InLinks*’ free connectivity and essential digital services will create connected corridors throughout the city to connect businesses to customers, residents to local services and visitors to a new part of London.”

Naren Patel, CEO, Primesight, said: Naren Patel, CEO, Primesight, said: “As London continues to develop as a smart city, the launch of the *InLinks* will provide a real value exchange between consumers and brands.

“Consumers will see relevant content from brands on the screens and use the free services provided, and in turn brands will benefit from being associated with a product that will provide real benefits to the people in the communities. It’s a fast, smart, ad-funded product that is set to benefit consumers and advertisers alike.

“We’re looking forward to the installation of new *InLinks* over the next 12 months across London and the UK as we continue to invest in Digital Out of Home.”

Ari Buchalter, CEO, Intersection, said: Ari Buchalter, CEO, Intersection, said: “As a global hub for business, technology, and culture, London is the perfect environment for digital innovation.

“As we’ve seen in New York City with LinkNYC, providing free high-speed Wi-Fi access, real-time information, engaging content, and digital services on city streets can valuably enrich people’s experiences of a city on their daily journeys between home, work, shopping, and entertainment.

“It also provides unique opportunities for brands to deliver truly relevant advertising in the context of those real-world experiences. We’re excited about the potential of InLinkUK from BT to transform everyday life for residents and visitors of London and cities throughout the UK.”