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Thursday, 13 February, 2003, 08:59 GMT

Broadband goes electric

The future looks bright for broadband

Fast net services in the UK could soon be available via electricity lines as an alternative way of reaching out to those communities cut off from broadband.

Scottish Hydro-Electric is planning to extend broadband trials to a town in Scotland and one in southern England reports Computing magazine.

Eventually the service could be available to all 3.5 million of its customers.

The company has already run technical trials of the technology in the small Scottish towns of Campbeltown and Crief.

Reaching out

The trials were a big success, offering up to 2MB per second - much faster than most broadband services on offer in the UK - for the price of £25.

Speed and price of any commercial service has yet to be decided but the firm says it will be competitive.

And there is no reason why other power companies could not follow suit, said a spokesman for the power company.

It could be a welcome alternative for people living outside of the reach of current broadband services.

"Technically we can reach to a lot more remote spots than BT can offer but some very

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remote areas will still be difficult," said the spokesman.

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