

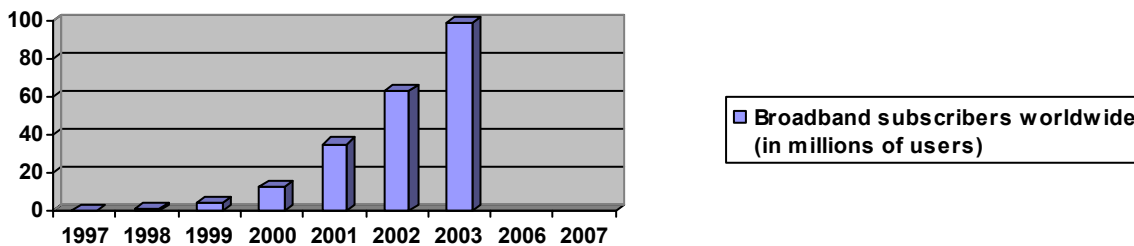
## Broadband

Early 2004 saw the 100 millionth broadband subscriber connected. What effect will fast Internet connections have on the business world?

1 Which of the following have you tried? Which do you use at work? Discuss your experiences with your partner.

broadband (fast speed) connection	wi-fi (wireless fidelity)
tele-working	surfing the web via a mobile phone

2 Look at the graph. Can you predict the number of broadband subscribers worldwide for 2006 and 2007?



2006 .....

2007 .....

3 Check your answer by scanning paragraph 1 of the interview with a manager, talking about the future of broadband.

"We sell computers and broadband has certainly improved our business. The benefits for us are improved customer service, improved productivity and better communication. I'd like to see even higher speeds, such as Japan, and even wider coverage. They say there will be over 200 million users worldwide by 2006 and that figure is set to hit nearly 250 million by 2007. So, by 2005, there will be more broadband connections worldwide than dial-up".

"Future trends? Well, at last, tele-working is becoming a reality. In the UK, more than 2.1 million people work from home and at least 8 million spend some time of their working week at home. This option is especially popular with sales and customer service staff, managers and technology-related

workers. People enjoy not having to travel to work and the greater flexibility. I think companies benefit too, given the rising cost of office space".

"I think that wi-fi hot spots will increase too – probably to trains, where a lot of my team do most of their out of office work. BOD (bandwidth on demand) means we can increase bandwidth on a short-term basis. This means we can turnaround orders quickly in busy periods and save money when it's quieter. Yeah, I'm glad we switched to broadband, despite the odd glitches".

4 Read the whole interview. What key points does the speaker make?

5 Can you use the following expressions in relation to your own company?

- |                               |                           |                            |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| (a) improved customer service | (b) improved productivity | (c) better communication   |
| (d) short-term basis          | (e) (the) rising cost of  | (f) (to) turnaround orders |

6 Discuss the following questions and report your ideas to the class.

- How has the surge in broadband usage benefited your company and the services it offers its customers/clients?
- Do you agree with the manager that tele-working and wi-fi will grow? Are they options for your company?
- What are your own predictions for the future of the Internet?