

Broadband champion

Firm puts village at forefront of communication revolution

INSTANT SEARCH Whalley

THE picturesque village of Whalley is the unlikely setting for a communications revolution designed to boost the fortunes of East Lancashire businesses.

Tucked away in a quiet side street, an 'e-laboratory' has been established to champion the business benefits of broadband. It's the brainchild of business information specialist Anthony Capstick, managing director of Instant Search.

The objective is to demonstrate the commercial advantage of high-speed telecom links to bosses who have been slow to take up the new technology.

"The take-up of broadband among small to medium-sized companies is still below 10 per cent," said Anthony. "I am convinced that every business would benefit from even a basic broadband connection."

Anthony knows the problems that can arise when companies decide to go for a high-speed internet link. As a business that sells research and information on companies, Instant Search realised a broadband connection was vital. But the Whalley telephone exchange was not equipped to deal with broadband.

Anthony, however, discovered the Elancs net project and arranged for a

high-speed connection. That is when the problems kicked in.

"Even though we were technically au fait, it took us months to integrate it to our other business systems."

"I remember thinking, if we struggled, just imagine how companies would manage with little idea about technology. It would be a complete nightmare."

The seeds of the e-Laboratory were sown and Anthony put together a project and approached the Department of Trade and Industry with his ideas. With funding from the North West Broadband Fund, the project was given the go-ahead earlier this year.

"As an Ambassador, Anthony is keen to promote the Ambassador scheme and the region," said Dennis Taylor, chief executive of the East Lancashire Partnership.

"Anthony's company is using its technology centre to help promote the Partnership and to develop access to affordable broadband for companies in the region. Anthony has recently been appointed judge for Broadband Britain Challenge."

The Instant Search broadband concept is simple: companies can book an appointment when they are shown the different types of broadband connections available and have a chance of talking through the advantages in a 'no sales' environment. Companies can also see how video-conferencing links can be set up and will be shown how computer-aided design work can be transferred electronically.



LINK: Anthony Capstick, MD of Instant Search believes that every business would benefit from broadband