

**Intellect Press Release**  
**Ref – IN083**  
**For Immediate Release - 1 April 2005**

## **Government and Industry Take Steps to Close the Digital Divide**

Intellect, the trade association for the UK hi-tech industry has welcomed the launch today of the Government's 'Digital Britain' strategy, and has confirmed that industry will work in partnership with Government to deliver the Strategy's proposals.

The Prime Minister Tony Blair, Secretary of State for Trade and Industry Patricia Hewitt and Intellect Director General John Higgins launched the Strategy at a Number 10 reception this morning, to an audience of Government and Industry Chiefs.

'Digital Britain' sets out a strategy for driving exploitation and use of broadband-enabled ICT, content, applications and services, and has been developed to enable the delivery of real benefits by helping UK's citizens to become healthier, better educated and more engaged in their communities and society. Successful implementation of this strategy will also provide a stimulus to further investment in both content and applications and the next generation of communications infrastructure.

Speaking at Number 10 Intellect Director General John Higgins said:

"Over the next 5 years the UK's ability to exploit technology will be the key differentiator between success and failure. The 'Digital Britain' strategy is therefore vital, as its launch not only confirms that exploitation of technology is back at the heart of the political agenda, but it also creates a solid framework for focused action by Government and industry."

"We don't underestimate the scale of the challenge ahead. As the private sector knows all too well, achieving technology driven transformation is hard. Implementing this strategy will require real commitment, energy and focus from the highest levels of government. Industry is ready to work in partnership through the Broadband Stakeholder Group to help drive this critical agenda, and continue to build on the solid foundation the strategy has created."

*Continued...*

*Government and Industry Take Steps to Close the Digital Divide / Continued / Page 2...*

“This Digital Britain strategy puts a stake in the ground for the wider knowledge economy agenda. The fact that Number 10 is driving this is important, as only leadership from the top will ensure buy in across all government departments. We believe that this initiative should be seen as the first step in developing a robust over-arching Knowledge Economy strategy. We’ve long argued that this will be vital if the UK is to achieve long term economic growth and social cohesion.”

Industry involvement in the initiative will be coordinated by the Broadband Stakeholder Group. Its role will be to advise government as it develops the detailed actions set out in the strategy and to monitor the strategy’s effective implementation.

Philip Graf CBE, Chairman of the BSG said, “Over the past three years, the BSG and government have worked effectively to ensure the widespread deployment of broadband in the UK. This initiative takes us to the next stage. It is all about ensuring that the UK not only has access to broadband, but fully exploits the potential that broadband offers.”

John Higgins concluded, “By developing this Strategy the Government has taken the vital first step towards its knowledge economy goals. Industry now looks to politicians to maintain the momentum and invites further collaboration on strategies designed to target other core knowledge economy issues such as innovation, exploitation and skills.”

## **Ends.**

### **Note to editors:**

The full Digital Britain Strategy can be obtained via

[http://www.strategy.gov.uk/work\\_areas/digital\\_strategy/index.asp](http://www.strategy.gov.uk/work_areas/digital_strategy/index.asp)

### **About Intellect –**

Intellect is the trade association for the UK IT, Telecommunications and Electronics industries in the UK. It represents a membership of over 1000 companies, spanning blue-chip multinationals to early stage technology companies, within an industry that together contributes around 10% of UK GDP and at least 15% of total UK trade.

More information about Intellect can be found at <http://www.intellectuk.org>.

*Continued...*

### **The Broadband Stakeholder Group**

The Broadband Stakeholder Group (BSG) is the key advisory group to government on promoting the adoption of broadband services. The BSG works as a facilitator, bringing together stakeholders from across the broadband value chain to share knowledge and work in partnership to support the UK's ongoing transition towards being a world leading connected economy by 2010.

Philip Graf CBE was CEO of Trinity Plc from 1993-1999 and CEO of Trinity Mirror plc from 1999-2003. He is currently working for The Change Partnership and is a director of a number of companies. He was appointed by the DCMS as the Independent Reviewer of BBC Online and published his report in May 2004.

#### **Press Contacts:**

Lucy Meacher, Hotwire, for Intellect

T: 020 7608 4656

E [lucy.meacher@hotwirepr.com](mailto:lucy.meacher@hotwirepr.com)

Jill Sutherland, PR Manager, Intellect

T: 020 7331 2024

E [jill.Sutherland@intellectuk.org](mailto:jill.Sutherland@intellectuk.org)