A short note on international comparative broadband statistics

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Introduction
A number of international bodies collect data on broadband availability, usage, pricing and speeds.

Such data originate from operators and refer in the case of fixed services to “lines” or subscriptions that are likely to be shared by family members in a residence or employees in a small business. Larger businesses are usually on different services that are not reported as broadband. Fixed and mobile are kept separate for a variety of reasons, the services not being directly comparable and the difficulties of identifying use of the Internet by customers with 3G enabled services and devices.

Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
The OECD has been publishing statistics on broadband adoption, pricing and technical characteristics for around a decade. The most recent data, supplied by national delegations, are available at its Broadband Portal.2

For example, it reports historical levels of broadband adoption measured by broadband lines per 100 people (see Figure 1). This has proved contentious because of different patterns of household composition, for example, the UK has more households that might have broadband since more people live alone. In other OECD countries there may be fewer divorces or more multi-generational homes.

2 http://www.oecd.org/sti/ict/broadband
The OECD reports fixed and wireless lines separately, sub-dividing fixed lines by technology (see Figure 2).
With the ever increasing importance of fibre to the home (FTTH), the OECD has collected data on the percentage of fixed lines which use fibre technologies (see Figure 3). The UK was reported almost no such lines at the end of 2010.
Figure 3  Percentage of fibre connections in total broadband (Dec. 2010)

European Commission

The European Commission provides comparative data in the Digital Agenda Scorecard and in reports by Eurostat, again these come from sources in the member states either national regulatory authorities or statistical agencies (See Figure 4). The new member states in Central and Eastern Europe had relatively limited fixed telephone networks in 1989 a legacy that even today means they are struggling to keep up with fixed broadband developments in Western Europe.
Figure 4  Broadband access lines per 100 inhabitants in 2010\(^3\)

The Information Society Directorate-General of the European Commission produces the Digital Agenda Scorecard, formerly known as the implementation report.\(^4\) It uses data from member states to provide a number of views of broadband availability (see Figure 5) and adoption (see Figure 6).

Figure 5  DSL national and rural coverage, December 2010, percentage of population

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\(^3\) http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&pcode=tsiir150&plugin=1

Some additional information is available at the European Broadband Portal.\(^5\)

**International Telecommunication Union**

The ITU is the United Nations agency responsible for telecommunications. It compiles data from its member states, though given its scope it has to be less ambitious than Eurostat or the OECD, often taking longer to produce its data.

One measure it uses is the cost of a “basket” of ICTs as a percentage of average income (see Figure 7).

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\(^5\) http://www.broadband-europe.eu/
Figure 7     Top 10 countries with the lowest ICT prices*

* http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/ict/statistics/