



Azotel to make the broadband connection

Azotel Technologies, which has recently moved into a new €1m facility in Cork, is planning a national and international campaign to encourage wireless internet service providers to connect remote areas, writes TRISH DROMEY

AZOTEL Technologies has developed a solution to problems with the broadband revolution — innovative wireless technology which allows it to be brought simply and cheaply to remote areas.

Set up one year ago at the National Software Centre, Azotel has just moved into a new purpose-built €1 million facility in Cork's Blackpool and is about to launch a campaign to encourage wireless internet service providers to use its technology to set up networks in areas which don't have coverage at present.

For Azotel founder and chief executive John O'Hare, Ireland is just the beginning.

He plans to market Azotel's technology internationally and is looking at markets in Africa, Asia and South America as well as northern and eastern Europe.

Broadband now has some 205 million users worldwide and the number is expected to swell to 410 million by 2010.

It's a multi-billion dollar market and the market potential for wireless solutions

is huge, since the problem of bringing broadband to remote areas is a global one, says Mr O'Hare.

Azotel is the second company set up by Mr O'Hare, an electronic engineer and wireless technology specialist who worked for Motorola for 10 years.

In 2002 he set up Amocom — the first company in Cork to offer wireless broadband.

He enrolled in the Genesis Enterprise Programme and set to work on developing the technology to deliver low cost, high speed wireless broadband internet access to the Cork market.

"We started small with some support from the Cork City Enterprise Board and by 2005 the company was the third-largest broadband operator in Cork," reveals Mr O'Hare.

In 2005, he sold off the Amocom network and transferred the R&D division to a new company, Azotel, which was set up to provide technology and services to wireless broadband operators. Amocom thus became Azotel's first customer.

"The first step was to prove the technology and the solution — we have already done this with Amocom — we now have a

model here that works which we can show to other operators," he explains. Since 2005 Azotel has licensed its technology to three more operators — Airwave Internet in east Cork, AHC networks in west Cork and Citynett in Norway.

According to Mr O'Hare, Azotel's edge in the competitive wireless broadband marketplace stems from its technology.

"We have developed an innovative technology which is both simpler and cheaper than many other methods," he says, explaining that it packs everything the wireless broadband operator needs into a single box.

He says this makes it possible for operators to concentrate on the commercial end of their business rather than the technology.

Last year Azotel raised €1m for its new premises in Blackpool and this year it has secured funding of €800,000 from private investors and Enterprise Ireland, which it will use for R&D.

The company employs four full-time staff and three part-time but is recruiting

and expects the workforce to grow to 15 full-time over the next 12 months.

Mr O'Hare expects the company to have a turnover of €500,000 by the end of this year and says that this will increase to €2 million in 2007 with the launch on international markets.

This week Azotel, in conjunction with Motorola, hosting 365 and the Bank of Ireland, is launching an initiative to encourage broadband operators to extend coverage in Ireland.

Over the next year Azotel is also planning to develop markets internationally and has already had discussions with operators in Dubai, Spain and South Africa.

The plan is to find suitable partners to act as master distributors for Azotel's technology. Mr O'Hare is confident that the company can achieve its target of selling to 300 operators within the next three years.

"Our strength is that we enable our operators to deliver a quality broadband service at a low cost. We are now selecting the right distribution partners abroad who have a significant presence in their market and a proven track record to roll out Azotel," he adds.

Publication: Irish Examiner

Date: Monday, June 26, 2006

Page: 17

Extract: 2 of 2

Circulation: 57.331

Author:

Headline: Azotel to make the broadband connection



Azotel Technologies chief executive John O'Hare attributes the company's competitive advantage to "an innovative technology which is both simpler and cheaper than many other methods".

Picture: Denis Miniha