

The Telkonet iWire System™

Best Western GB Chain



Type of building	Hotel
Location	Throughout Great Britain
Years built	13th Century to Present
Number of buildings	1 building (300 hotels)
Number of floors	From 2 or more floors
Number of rooms	Over 16,000 across Great Britain
Telkonet installation date	Started 2005

Challenge

To provide a flexible, cost-effective solution to cater to a wide range of different hotel types, budgets and requirements.

In November 2005, the Best Western Hotel group announced a global initiative, aiming to install high speed Internet access (HSIA) in all hotel public areas and at least 15% of all guest bedrooms by January 2006. In the United Kingdom, Best Western GB decided to go one step further, targeting 100% of all guest bedrooms and kicking off an aggressive timetable to achieve this goal. With just over 300 members across Great Britain, Best Western GB made the decision to select a single contractor to co-ordinate the initiative. Recently-established specialist installation company Divine Internet won the contract on the basis of a creative package, which combines a range of carefully tailored solutions comprising Telkonet's PLC technology, wireless equipment from Zyxel, and the ANTLabs Zero Configuration gateway.

The driver behind the high-speed Internet access programme was principally to respond to rising demand from guests for broadband in the bedrooms, across both corporate and leisure bookings, as well as ensuring the most complete communications packages for corporate events.

Russell Imrie, Chairman of Best Western GB and Managing Director of the Best Western Bruntsfield Hotel, explains their approach: "HSIA is the modern equivalent of putting colour televisions in the bedrooms – guests simply expect to be able to access the Internet when they are travelling, and

we needed to provide a user friendly, simple and efficient method. We have all experienced the traumas of conventional switchboard access, and we were determined to set a new standard across the Best Western group. Our Head of IT and Database, Mike Goryl, researched the market, and identified Divine Internet as our preferred supplier. This was based on the excellent package that combined a best of breed solution across both wired PLC and WiFi access, complemented by an intelligent and intuitive gateway. We were impressed by the trials, and kicked off the roll-out in September with my own hotel – the Bruntsfield – as the first site. The intention is that each hotel can select the most appropriate option from Divine Internet's package, based on the type of building, any existing cabling and the individual requirement. This provides us all with the maximum flexibility, within an agreed overall strategy."

Solution

A best of breed package across both wired PLC and WiFi access. Each hotel can select the most appropriate option, based on the type of building, any existing cabling and its best-fit requirement.

The Bruntsfield Hotel was also the first installation to involve Telkonet's powerline communications (PLC) technology – the Telkonet iWire System. Comprising six classic townhouse buildings from the early 19th century, together with a recent extension, the Best Western Bruntsfield Hotel has 71 rooms and is located in the centre of Edinburgh. The Bruntsfield

Hotel project involved a three-day installation, with Divine Internet putting in a complete broadband system throughout the historic building, supported by engineers from both Telkonet and ANTLabs. Divine Internet installed Telkonet's PLC technology as the backbone throughout the hotel, with Telkonet iBridge™ units in all bedrooms in the older parts of the hotel, mounted discretely behind the writing desk. The public areas are served by wireless access, supported by further Telkonet iBridge units for customers requiring hard-wired secure access. The Bruntsfield enjoys an extremely stable and fast connection, with a 10Mb cable modem connection from Telewest.

"The Best Western Bruntsfield Hotel was the first to implement the new solution, economically upgrading a total of 71 bedrooms with wired high-speed Internet access, plus wireless and hard-wired access in our public areas and conference rooms. The team took just three days to install the system, with a faultless implementation."

**Russell Imrie,
Chairman, Best Western GB
Managing Director, Best Western Bruntsfield Hotel**

The venue required a high-speed Internet solution that was easy to install, with minimal disruption during the installation process. Telkonet's solution is ideally suited to this type of installation, as it uses a building's existing electrical wiring to distribute broadband Internet and data access. It was chosen for its low cost, rapid and straightforward installation – irrespective of the size of building or complex involved,

the technology transforms every power outlet into an Internet-enabled data port. Expanding on the installation process, Russell Imrie commented: "The guest impact was zero – after a guest had checked out, the team connected the Telkonet iBridge and the power lead in each room, with housekeeping then preparing the room – just one-hour from start to finish. We held a Best Western Europe marketing meeting the week following the installation, involving 24 delegates, who all required high speed Internet access, and everything worked fine."

From the guest perspective, using the new HSIA system could not be easier. On connection to any of the Internet access points, the guest's computer is automatically configured for a smooth log on, simply requiring a password and user name – purchased from Reception as 1-hour, 4-hour or 24-hour ticket options for a flat charge. In the future, Russell envisages that the service will become part of the room charge, once the initial capital investment has been recovered and the Hotel's focus moves onto fulfilling the next generation of technology required to satisfy guest demand.

Russell Imrie concludes: "We now have the backbone in place that will enable us to deliver future guest services quickly and economically – such as Voice over Internet, interactive games and video on demand. We have future-proofed our hotel with this investment, and my original fear of seeing guests waiting at reception with their laptops for advice on how to connect to the Internet has quite simply evaporated. The ANTLabs interface combined with the Telkonet iBridge has created a seamless, efficient service that fully reflects our objective of providing state-of-the-art Internet access in guest bedrooms. The same technology also supports our corporate customers' requirements for secure hard-wired access in all bedrooms, public areas and conference rooms, with the Telkonet PLC system operating in tandem with the wireless access."

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