

Introduction

More people than ever spend part of their working week away from the office. They are finding that the capacity to do their job when it suits them, where it suits them, is changing their lives. For some it has allowed them to do a high technology job from a remote rural location; for others it has meant being able to play a larger part in family life; and for others the chance to work the way they want to, rather than being driven by the routine of the office. And of course, for many small businesses, it's a relatively low cost start-up option.

e-working – balancing life-style with work style

It is called e-working. It means doing your job from your home or on the move, using communications technology. However most of the people who work this way would not think of themselves as e-workers; they are accountants, administrators, customer service representatives, data entry clerks, lawyers, manager, programmers.

That's how it should be, if you have to define yourself in terms of the technology you use then the technology is getting in the way. Communications technology should be transparent, in the background helping you get the job done, connecting you to the office, the supplier, and the customer from your home. The telephone, the Internet, the fax machine, and even the humble pager are making this a reality.

This Information Pack has been designed to help you decide if e-working is right for you.

It will help you:

- *Understand the benefits and drawbacks to e-working*
- *Build a convincing case for your employer*
- *Design an efficient home office environment*
- *Anticipate practical issues such as insurance, tax, and health & safety*
- *Work effectively remotely e-working is just another way of doing your job that should be open to as many people as possible.*

If you are an employee your employer might be interested in Eircom's e-working Manual for Employers, which explains Eworking from their perspective.

Freefone 1800 35 36 35 for a free copy.

So what is eworking exactly

eworking is doing your job at a distance from your employer or clients using communications technology.

Broadly there are four main ways you could ework:

Work full time from home

Some people do office-type jobs but work full-time from home.

Split your time between the home and office

One or two days at home is typical. Off-peaking, or working from home during peak congestion and travelling to and from the office at quieter times, falls into this category.

Work on the move

Some of us depend on getting out of the office to do the job. Sales people, surveyors and journalists are typical mobile workers. Others move from office to office using whatever desk space is available - this is called hot desking.

Work from a telecentre

Neighbouring telecentres pool computers and communications resources.

All sorts of people ework: employees, self-employed, people with disabilities, carers, down-shifters, entrepreneurs, portfolio workers, rural dwellers, and those who ework simply because it is a more sensible way to live their lives.

Some basic facts

The Irish are keen on eworking, more so in fact than some of our European partners. Detailed research, including an investigation of attitudes to Eworking in Ireland was carried out in 1996 for the Telefutures Report, sponsored by Eircom and Forbairt.

Key statistics include:

Public positive on Eworking

Thirty nine per cent of the general public think working from home is a good idea, compared to 36 per cent in the UK, 39 per cent in France, and 31 per cent in Germany.

Most of the public favour splitting time between the office and home

Half the public believe employers should allow staff to work from home at least some of the time. Only 6 per cent favour staff working from home all the time. Banking staff were most keen on eworking, with almost four out of five people employed in banking supportive of home-working.

Over 100,000 people in Ireland occasionally work from home during normal hours

Not all of these people would be classed as eworkers. Other European research suggests that only around 15 per cent, that is 15,000 of this group would be eworkers in the formal sense.

Around a third of the working population would like to ework if possible

There is a broad variation by age and region. Over half of younger workers would like to work from home 1-2 days each week, while people living in rural areas were, understandably, particularly keen on

eworking, (56 per cent).

Irish homes could be better equipped with technology

- *One per cent have a modem*
- *Three per cent have a fax machine*
- *Seven per cent have a mobile phone*
- *Seven per cent have an answering machine*
- *Nineteen per cent have a computer*

Building a case for eworking

Eworking can be a rewarding experience but only if it is properly planned. That means building a case for eworking that makes sense to you and, if you are an employee, convinces your employer.

Each case will be different, but it may be constructed from this ten point plan:

- *Be sure why you want to ework*
- *Decide if Eworking would suit you*
- *Assess how suitable your job is for eworking*
- *Write down the advantages and disadvantages*
- *Identify how an employer would benefit*
- *Plan the work environment*
- *Research the technology*
- *Understand the contractual issues*
- *Understand the legal and financial issues*
- *Understand the health and safety issues*

Be sure why you want to Ework

Write down in one or two sentences why you want to ework. This statement will guide the rest of your eworking plan. Some potential reasons might include:

- *I want to live in my home town, not in the city*
- *My family situation means working from home makes more sense*
- *The office is too distracting for the type of work I do*
- *I waste over an hour each day travelling to and from work*
- *My clients are widely dispersed, coming back to the office all the time makes no sense*
- *I am setting up my own business and want to keep costs down*

There are many other valid reasons why Eworking might suit you

Everything you might need, at home

For thirty years Sean O'Neill worked with a large American multi-national, before retiring from a senior management position to set up his own business. Like many other eworkers Sean didn't decide to become an eworker, it just made more sense to work from home rather than drive from Wicklow to an office in Dublin.

Sean is a self-employed consultant specialising in Sales Management, Internet Business, and Management Consultancy. His work does involve face-to-face interaction with clients, delivering seminars and training sessions, but a large proportion can be conducted over the telephone.

While an avid Internet and e-mail user, he finds the telephone has been his business' greatest asset, particularly for teleconferencing. In the course of his work he teleconferences with clients and prospective business partners from Ireland to South East Asia. He doesn't find the idea of talking to five or six faceless people at one time at all disconcerting. "It's all a question of procedure-once you establish the standard structure of meetings, it's no more difficult than dealing with a room full of people. It is both time- and cost-effective, eliminating the need for travel."

A father of four children, the youngest of whom is 14, Sean has become appreciative of the benefits of Eworking since establishing his consultancy four years ago. He particularly welcomes the opportunities it offers to participate in his children's lives and contrasts his experience of fatherhood now with that as an employee in a highly pressured environment.

Sean also welcomes the flexibility of being able to work from anywhere. Frequently, he packs his computer in the car, diverts his calls and heads off to West Cork and sets up his 'office' there. One thing he does not mess about commuting to work is the daily wrangle with fellow travellers. Now he jokes with his wife in the morning about 'the traffic' as he crosses the hall from the kitchen to his office.

A Dublin-based client recently set aside an office and car parking space for him, but he rarely uses it. He has everything he needs at home.

Would you suit Eworking?

Some people are more suited to eworking than others. Working remotely from colleagues puts extra demands on people. Inevitably some will be more able to meet those demands than others.

A home based worker must:

- *Show good self-discipline*
- *Have strong communication skills*
- *Be able to work independently*
- *Be trustworthy*

If you are an employee at some point in your life your employer will make an assessment on your suitability for eworking. Broadly they will be assessing:

- *Your capacity to work independently*
- *Your maturity*
- *Your commitment to the company*
- *Your personal productivity in the office*

It would be helpful at this stage to state briefly what personal attributes make you a suitable candidate for eworking. If you are an employee this should include some evidence of your commitment to the company.

Is my job suitable for Eworking?

Eworking may not be appropriate for your job. To a machine operator, working from home presents an insurmountable obstacle. A freelance journalist, on the other hand, would naturally work from home. In between lie most other jobs: part of the job description is suitable for home working, other parts need the office resources or interaction with other staff.

A job suitable for eworking has three elements:

- *It has a high information content*
- *It comprises autonomous tasks*
- *It can be managed by setting objectives*

You probably have a reasonable idea how suitable your job is for eworking already, but you could analyse it more precisely with this simple procedure.

- *Divide each day into 30 minute intervals. In each 30 minutes slot record what you have been doing: telephone calls, working on your own at the desk, meetings, breaks, etc.*
- *Score each 30 minute interval on a five point scale for information content, autonomy, and management supervision. (where 1 = a low information content, 5 = a high information content, etc)*
- *Average your scores, to get one figure for each element: information, autonomy, and management. To be suitable for Teleworking your job would earn high scores for information and autonomy, and a low figure for management supervision required.*

Someone who spends a lot of time working in a team role will score low on autonomy, and may come to the conclusion that their job is not suitable for eworking at all, or perhaps just one day a week.

Someone else may find that their job is highly informational and autonomous and task oriented, meaning there is no justification for being in the office at all!

Put this analysis into your business case for Teleworking.

What are the advantages and disadvantages?

Eworking is not for everyone. Some find it liberating, others cannot wait to get back to the buzz of the office. Study the list of pros and cons carefully and decide which apply to you. Write these down. You may come up with other advantages and disadvantages.

Advantages

You can work hours that suit you

Many people who ework cite personal freedom as the greatest benefit, the freedom to work when you want, how you want. Of course if you are part of a team you must be available to other team members; often a core period is defined as part of your ework contract. Outside of the core period you can respond to life events more flexibly than those tied to the office routine.

You have greater choice where you live

Eworking offers skilled people living in rural areas the chance to use those skills without having to relocate. Often people who have worked in cities or abroad have found that they can return to their home and work effectively using the contracts they built up in their previous jobs.

You can cut down on commuting to work

Commuting to work used never to be an issue in Ireland, but in the cities and towns traffic has become a worsening problem. Removing the frustration and the sheer waste of time of sitting in traffic queues is also high on the Teleworking benefit lists.

You can be more involve in your family

Parents who work long hours in offices and also have significant commute to work can find that the time available to spend with their children is too short. Eworking can give back substantial time each day to be spent with the family in the morning and the evening.

It is important to stress that eworking is not the answer to childcare – even though you are at home you are in work mode. However it can mean the difference between being there when your children come home from school and coming home hours later.

Family reasons make working from home the only alternative

For some, family reasons mean eworking is a must and not an option. For example where a carer looks after an elderly relative who needs someone around but does not require constant attention, ework might suit perfectly.

A start for the self employed

Eworking reduces those up-front investment costs and takes some of the risk out of a business start-up.

Disadvantages

Some people find eworking de-motivating. Not everyone has the discipline required to work alone at home. The temptation of the television, or the house chores may make sitting down to do office work impossible.

Others miss the company of colleagues at the office

Isolation can affect eworkers. They miss the banter in the office and the stimulus of work colleagues.

You could miss out on opportunities such as promotion or trips

Inevitably the sheer fact of not being there may mean you miss opportunities at work.

It can become difficult to separate work from home life

It can be difficult to switch off once work is over. That dreaded commute home does put distance between your working life and your home life.

You may be able to think of other advantages and disadvantages. Write them all into your eworking plan.

The day's your own to plan

David Watson, F.C.A., conducts his financial consultancy from home, advising on investment and savings plans, pensions, mortgages, protection, life assurance. His business operates under the umbrella of RJ Temple PLC, a UK-based organisation with a regional office in Belfast, giving his company depth and stability. From his home he hooks into the RJ Temple Intranet for e-mail and exchange of documents.

With clients, though, there is no substitute for face-to-face contact, so David splits his time between working from home and mobile working, organising briefing seminars and meeting clients. Some turn out to be eworkers themselves, "I rang one business in Donnybrook and discovered that the client was actually talking to me from his home, somewhere in the West of Ireland."

The corporate Intranet connection has saved him time and money on letters, phone calls, and travel. Equally important, it makes him feel part of a larger organisation, even though he works from home. He doubts whether he would be tempted into the RJ Temple planned office in Dublin.

Among the benefits of Teleworking he appreciates the variety: one week could be spent mainly in his front-room office, and the next could be spent largely on the road. He also manages to avoid rush hour traffic. "I can structure my hours any way that I want, the day's your own to plan."

How would my employer benefit?

Eworking benefits the organisation as well as the individual. On productivity alone research shows that eworkers deliver gains of between 15 and 40 per cent. A number of studies have demonstrated also that eworkers are:

- *More reliable*
- *More loyal*
- *More likely to produce better quality work*
- *Likely to take less time off*
- *Likely to stay longer with the organisation*

There are other ways an employer might benefit:

- *Progressive employers attract quality staff. Eworking could form part of an equal opportunities programme.*
- *Cramped offices can be rejuvenated through a combination of eworking and desk sharing or hot desking. An employer might even avoid having to move to larger offices as they expand.*
- *The average office worker costs their company £4,000 per annum for heating, light, desk space, technology and general office support. A switch to homeworking alleviates some of these costs, although it does create others.*
- *Eworkers often want to work outside of the conventional nine to five. One way an employer could capitalise on this would be to extend sales/service hours for customers.*
- *By utilising a pool of self-employed eworkers an employer could smooth peaks and troughs in their work scheduling.*
- *If you have a skill that the organisation cannot afford to lose they may consider eworking simply to retain you.*
- *If your employer is a subsidiary of a larger multi-national you may find that the corporation has a eworking policy that could be applied in Ireland.*

Briefly write down how your employer would benefit. You may come up with other benefits.

London a short tele-hop away

Joan works for a bank in London in their IT department. After getting married she wanted to move back to Ireland, but also to stay with her company. She noticed in the corporate brochure that the US-owned bank expressed a commitment to flexible working. However no one in the London office worked that way. Joan mentioned it to her manager. She was supportive and asked her to prepare a case for eworking.

The bank found her prepared case for eworking persuasive, and allowed her to pioneer the workstyle. Joan now works every Monday to Wednesday in the London office of the bank, and returns to Ireland on Wednesday evening. She works from home Thursday and Friday, and spends the weekend in Ireland before returning to London early on Monday morning.

The bank is pleased with the arrangement because:

- *It has retained a valued staff member*
- *Her productivity has been improved*
- *The London office is seen to have aligned with corporate policy*
- *The personnel department has had a chance to learn about Teleworking in a low risk manner*

The bank paid for the computer and communications technology and the installation of an ISDN line that connects Joan directly into the bank computer system. However Joan must pay all her own travel costs between Dublin and London.

Joan sees the arrangement as short term and ultimately wants to convince the bank to allow her to work full-time from Ireland, or to give her contract work that she can do freelance. However eworking has given her the breathing space to re-establish herself in Ireland and continue working in the City of London.

Plan the work environment

Working from home should be an enriching experience, which begins with planning the work environment. It is no use working off the kitchen table, then having to clear everything away to feed the children, or perching in the living room with your laptop. Designate some room would be the best solution, though you may not feel able or willing to surrender a room to work.

Everyone you deal with by telephone – your office of your clients – should have no reason to doubt you are anywhere but ‘at work’.

Having chosen the space turn it into a work environment. A wall planner, and a pin board are two inexpensive starters. Second hand office furniture is widely available. The ‘European Health & Safety at Work Directive is now in force, with minimum guidelines for the office workstation. An employee will find that their employer is responsible for applying the Work Directive. Only buy quality furniture and technology that conforms to the directive.

Seven top tips for eworkers

1. Create the proper environment

Think about the room, the computer, the desk, the chair. Some people even choose to wear work clothes while at home.

2. Accept all help from family and friends

They are generally intrigued by your new lifestyle and want to help, if only to find out more.

3. Be flexible about your working hours

You are probably working this way because you want flexibility in your life. Often the greatest barrier to that is yourself. Do not be afraid to close up shop, there will be enough nights spent slaving over a hot computer.

4. Be sensitive to day time callers, but expect them to be sensitive to you

You can't stop the day-to-day routine of the house because you have decided to work from home, nor should you want to. Be flexible about spending time with callers, but be equally prepared to tell people you have to work, and would they mind leaving you for now.

5. If you are not getting paid, don't do it

6. Learn to stop

There are no workmates to entice you away at 5 o'clock, so be disciplined about stopping. Most managers fear eWorking creates slackness and shirking, in practice learning to stop is the issue.

7. Take frequent breaks

Daily office life is disrupted by normal human interaction. There is a chance you won't get this in the spare bedroom. Take frequent breaks. If you don't have someone else in the house, shut up shop and go outside at least once a day.

A Teleworker by no other name

Like many others, Andy Conway never thought of himself as a eWorker, until 1992, while in Brussels on business he was introduced as a "eWorker". He is, in fact, a research consultant with an interest in rural development. His practise, CERA, part of the international consultancy CIRCA, is now 10 years old.

The business started in a room at the back of the house; now, the house has grown around the office. Nevertheless, to Andy his office is still 'at the back of the house'. Telecommunications is crucial for the business: he has two telephone lines into the house, one for the home and the business and one for fax and data traffic; including e-mail and Internet use.

Eworking is of both practical and professional interest. It not only saves him time, but has a relevance to his rural development work. "Technology has the potential to empower people in rural areas, giving them access to a wider range of occupations." He believes that developments like Teleworking offer rural communities opportunities to overcome unemployment associated with geographic distance from urban centres. From his perspective, you could be on the top of Mount Errigal or on the train to Galway and still work using modern technology.

Eworking allows him flexibility. He has gone to bed wrestling with a complex statistical problem, only to awake in the middle of the night with the answer, and to get up to start working straight away while the solution was still fresh in his head.

He is also grateful that he began eworking while his children were still living at home. It allowed him to be more involved in his children's lives and their activities. Rather than the typical grunt in response to the well-worn question, "So how was your day?" he was there when they arrived home from school and met them when the excitement and trials of the day were still fresh.

Research the technology

Getting the technology is an important part of any eworking plan. A brief outline of the essentials required follows. With this manual, you will also find a complete list of Eircom's products and services suitable for eworking. A basic eworker technology pack might include some of the following:

- *A personal computer*
- *Office software*
- *A printer*
- *A fax/modem and/or a fax machine (and a terminal adapter if using ISDN)*
- *A desk and office chair*
- *Secure storage space*
- *A dedicated telephone (either PSTN or ISDN) line*
- *An Internet connection*
- *A business telephone set*
- *An answering machine or voicemail service*

Mobile workers may like to add laptop, GSM phone and fax modem, a calling card, pager and Call Forwarding to this list.

You ought to consider and cost what technology would be appropriate to you. Write this down as part of your eworking plan. There are specific communications-related issues that Eircom can assist with. For example:

Multiple Lines

A standard telephone line would suffice for the occasional foray onto the Internet to pick up e-mails, or send and receive files, or send/ receive the occasional fax. However it is difficult getting by with just one phone line. Without an itemised bill one cannot distinguish between personal calls and work calls. If your employer has agreed to pay a proportion of your bill it is unlikely they will accept a guesstimated of how much is owed. Include a fax machine and/or a modem and it becomes impossible to manage on one line.

There are other considerations too. If others share your home can you justify hogging the telephone all day for work? From another perspective, how will your family/flat mates react to incoming work calls? You cannot expect them to function as the office receptionist.

A better solution is to have two lines, and in some cases three: one for domestic calls, one for work, and one for data traffic.

Integrated Services Digital Network (ISDN)

As communications usage becomes heavier an ISDN telephone line becomes more appropriate. For one it supports several telephone numbers on one line. It also costs less than you might think. But its primary advantages is its technology superiority over the conventional telephone network:

- *Instant connection and disconnection to and from the network*
- *High speed information exchange*

- *High quality digital lines(almost error free)*
- *Multi-device access (a telephone, fax, and PC can share the same line)*

Take a look at Eircom's Teleworking products and services detailed at the end of this document.

Take some time now to plan out your technology needs. Employees could expect their employer to fund the cost of the technology; self-employed people will be able to write their technology off against tax.

Home is the business

As Ireland's first freelance environmental consultant 55 year-old Jack O'Sullivan has a varied career, working for governments, NGO's, companies and resident groups. His work has taken him from Mayo to Africa and Eastern Europe. It was while working in Lithuania in 1994 that he feels he really became a eworker.

In order to keep a portfolio of projects active in Ireland he ran his business on-line, using a notebook PC with modem, a phone line and a printer. Each evening, from Lithuania he would deal with clients either via his home office in Dublin or directly by fax (using WinFax), or by e-mail.

The office is a semi-detached house in a quiet street in South County Dublin. He has been self-employed for the past 21 years and has worked from home for most of that time. Gradually the work space has grown; he began with a telephone and a typewriter in a corner of a room; now, his environment consultancy requires a dedicated room as an office, and additional space to store files and books in the home he shares with his partner.

Eworking suits Jack's business. A team comes together to work on a project and disband once it's finished. During the life-time of any project communications via e-mail and telephone can often be the only contact with some team members have with each other. E-mail has eliminated all the extra time, inconvenience and expense of travelling to attend meetings. As Jack says, "e-mail is so much better as a working medium [than travelling to meetings] we exchange work instantaneously and work on it together from a distance. The modem, the PC and the telephone line are the key elements of my business".

Understand the contractual issues

Employees may find their employer wants to amend their contract of employment. Broadly any amendments should not supersede, or contravene, an existing contract of employment. However there are issues that are unique to Teleworking and these can be dealt with through contract extensions. The points listed below are guidelines only, you should seek the advice of a qualified professional before entering into any contractual extension. Include a section on contractual considerations on your Teleworking plan.

Your employer may:

- *Specify a trial period to see if eworking suits both parties*
- *Reserve the right to terminate the agreement with a notice period, and expect you to come back to the office full time. You should also have this right*
- *Agree core working hours so that employer and employee understand the parameters of the*

eworking arrangement

- *Retain the right to flexibility. They may need you in the office when you expect a day at home.*
- *Insist on a data confidentiality clause, making you responsible for the secure storage of the company documents at home*
- *Ask you to agree to regular inspections of the home work environment*
- *Consider a disclaimer absolving the organisation of any responsibility for tax, insurance, housing authority, and/or business rates implication of an employee choosing to work from home*

You should:

- *Insist that your employee rights and benefits are not affected by the decision to ework*
- *Agree who will be responsible for equipment and stationary*
- *Clearly establish the organisation's responsibility for communication costs, e.g. the installation of ISDN lines, payment of usage and rental charges. Itemised telephone bills can minimise misunderstanding*
- *Agree who is responsible for utility charges in the home: heating, electricity, gas, etc.*
- *Make sure that your employer is aware of their responsibility to ensure that the home working environment conforms to the European Directives*
- *Make sure your employer is responsible for any work-related injuries incurred on company business at home*

Legal and financial issues

For Revenue and Social Welfare purposes a worker is either an employee or self-employed, though the distinction between the two can be blurred. The distinction the Revenue makes is whether an individual has a 'contract of services' (i.e. an employee), or a 'contract for services.' (i.e. a self-employed person/independent contractor).

Self-employed eworkers will be responsible for their own tax affairs and should consult a qualified accountant to plan efficiently; employees can expect their employer to contribute to equipping the home office environment and meet the ongoing costs.

Home-based workers are covered by the same legislation as their office-based colleagues.

The main relevant acts are:

- *Health Safety and Welfare at Work Act(1989)*
- *Data Protection Act(1988)*
- *European Display Screen Directive(Irish Law 1993)*
- *European Use of Work Equipment(Irish Law (1993)*

The Data Protection Act (1989) specifically relates to personal data. It is a criminal offence to process personal data when not registered (when required) with the Data Protection Commissioner, or to disclose personal data to a third party without authorisation.

The Act applies even where an organisation does not have to register with the Data Protection Commissioner. Where a eworker works in one member of the country and their employer is based in

another, the European Convention of the Law Application to Contractual Obligation applies. This establishes the principle of freedom of choice as to which nation's law is applied. A contract shall be governed by the laws chosen by the parties, subject to the proviso that the choice made should not deprive the employee of any rights that would be applicable in the absence of choice.

A number of legal and financial issues remain to be clarified. For example does the Health & Safety Authority truly have the right to enter your home when you are a eworker; do the Revenue Commissioners consider technology provided by your employer a benefit in kind if they have dual use in the home; is the theoretical liability to Capital Gains Tax enforceable, etc. The government has appointed a National Telework Commission to consider these and other issues, the NTC will report on or before April 1999.

Other contractual and financial issues

Employer's liability insurance

Employer's liability insurance is often specific to the address on the policy document. Is your home work environment covered?

Home Insurance

Domestic insurance companies have become quite progressive about home-based working, provided they are kept informed. Where clients do not call at the house and the eworker does not keep stock at home, insurers are quite prepared to cover home computer equipment that is used for work purposes. There is even a case for reduced premiums on the grounds that having someone in the home all day increases security. Other companies have special policies specifically for home workers, which include additional cover such as personal liability insurance and cover for loss of earnings due to computer failure.

Capital Gains Tax

A theoretical liability to Capitals Gains Tax could be incurred by a homeworker where a room is exclusively given over to business use. CGT liability should not be an issue where a room at home has dual use for domestic and work purposes.

Mortgage and Tenancy Agreements

Home owners would be advised to inform their mortgage lender, and tenants to tell their landlords that they intend working from home. Usually this would not be a problem for computer-based work, since people will not be calling at the home.

Security first – eight top tips

It is important that you do not rely on insurance alone. Do your own security audit on your premises. There is no need to get a security consultant in, a simple walk around your house will expose vulnerable spots.

- *Fit all doors and windows with security bolts*
- *Never leave doors and windows open when you leave the house*
- *Ensure your computer and communications equipment is not visible from the street*

- *Back up data regularly and store the back-ups away from the computer*
- *Invest in secure storage for documents*
- *Consider carefully how you will protect work equipment while you are away from home*
- *Fit a burglar alarm*
- *Fit smoke detectors*

Include a home security audit in your eworking plan.

1. The Basics

Below you'll find information on the essentials needed to set up a home office. The beauty of these products and services is that you can pick and choose just what you'll need for their requirements. This allows you the flexibility to add more complex products when required, and to ensure that every eworker has the set-up that's right for them.

Product Description

Dedicated Telephone Line

Why not install an additional telephone line for business use, or solely as a fax/dial-up connection? This separates business and personal calls and avoids tying up the home phone line. So you'll never miss that important call. Or why not gain the benefits of the advanced features of the 2x64k channels of Basic Rate ISDN? This is suitable if you need high-speed information transfer and Internet access while simultaneously using your line for fax or voice calls.

Telephone Sets and Systems

A wide range of fully guaranteed and Department of Communications approved telephones are available. Particularly suitable for the Home Office are our Advanced Phones which are compatible with Call Management Services, offer LCD display, memory for programming numbers, Handsfree operation, Hold and Last Number redial facilities. Cordless phones allowing crystal clear call clarity with complete portability around the home are also popular. Or why not invest in a combined phone that also acts as an answering machine, fax and copier? Many of our telephone systems also allow extensions to be installed at home so callers have access to you using the same number whether you're at home or work: and you have the same range of functions available as at your office desk.

Call Management Services

To help you make the most of the phone and ensure you'll never miss a call, we have a range of Call Management Services which are all free of connection and rental charges. Call Answering provides you with your own mailbox for callers to leave messages when you can't take their call. When you are already on the phone, Call Waiting lets you know with a discreet 'beep tone' on your line if another caller is trying to get through to your number. You then have the option of ignoring the other call or switching over to it and holding your first call. Call Forwarding allows you to divert calls from your own telephone number to any local, national or mobile number. Your calls follow you - useful for those days when you're out of the office or away from base. And if you need to talk to 2 people simultaneously no matter where they are, 3 Way Calling allows you to do just that.

Answering Machines

As an alternative to Call Answering, eircom also provides a range of standalone answering machines ideal for call screening and remote access. Several of our advanced phones include a built in answering machine, as do most of the combined fax/phones on offer.

Fax Machines

As the leading supplier of faxes to the Irish market, we have a machine for you whether you're looking for a basic version or a top of the range plain paper model. Particularly popular are combined fax/phones, many of which also offer copier, scanning, and answering machine facilities. Most models offer AutoDial storage, remote access, automatic cutters and feeders.

Many of the plain paper fax machines are also PC compatible. Our list of suppliers includes Sagem, Sharp, Panasonic and Olivetti.

CD Directory

To cut out the need for Directory Enquiries, and provide instant access to 6 telephone directories, why not buy our Directory on CD-Rom. This is fast and easy to use on your own PC. Accessories Even something as simple and inexpensive as a telephone extension lead and a longer handset cord can make it easier to use the Home office phone. A headset is also useful if you're on the phone a lot.

Accessories

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2: TRANSMITTING DATA

For those working away from the office, transmitting information is their and your key priority. You need fast, secure and efficient transmission options. Listed below are a range which cover every need, depending on the volume and location of information.

Product Description

PSTN Dial-up

For occasional use such as downloading email, a standard PSTN line connection. We recommend an additional line dedicated for this use. Although most PCs now have internal modems, eircom also supplies an external modem should you require one.

ISDN

If you want to handle voice, data, images and video at greater speed, you'll need a Basic Rate ISDN line. This gives you 2 x 64 k channels (which can be used singly, together, and with compression) for high-speed secure information transfer, remote LAN access, Internet access, and simultaneous fax/voice calls.

Datacomms equipment

To use ISDN, you'll need an ISDN card or an external terminal adaptor. eircom supplies enhanced terminal adaptors, which allow for simultaneous applications and come complete with extensive after sales support. eircom also sell routers for the heavy volume user who requires more security

Fax Machines

If you need to send and receive written documents, eircom offers a range of Sagem, Sharp, Panasonic and Olivetti fax machines. Most models offer AutoDial storage, remote access, automatic cutters and feeders. Many of the plain paper fax machines are also PC compatible. Particularly popular are combined fax/phones, many of which also offer copier, scanning, and answering machine facilities.

Eircom.net

Eircom.net, part of Eirtrade – Ireland's leading provider of Interactive and Internet solutions, provides for high-speed access to the Internet, World Wide Web and Email. A unique feature is that it is accessed for the price of a local call nationwide. A 24-hour Helpdesk is also available. Free starter packs

(offering registration and one month's subscription) are available.

PCs

eircom sells Compaq PCs and Laptops, which is one of the best known yet affordable ranges in the market today. All come with Pentium Processor, MMX Technology and are Internet Ready. We also stock a range of Hewlett Packard and Olivetti printers, featuring speedy full colour printing.

Mobile Data

Your GSM mobile phone used together with a PCMCIA Card and a laptop will enable you to transmit data. eircom also stocks mobile phones such as the Nokia Communicator which can be used for email, Internet and file transfer applications

Other Data Services

eircom also supplies a range of Advanced Data Services such as Eirpac, Frame Relay, Private Circuits (National and International) and Virtual Private Networks (National and International). Different options depending on your security, speed and data volume requirements are available

3. ON THE MOVE

Today, most people spend at least some of their working day out of the office. A simple solution to the communication challenges this presents may include a Pager and a Chargecard. Or why not try Call forwarding and a mobile phone for two-way communication. For the more advanced user, eircom also provides a range of Laptops, and Mobile Data options.

Product Description

Call Management Services

Free of connection and rental charges, Call Forwarding allows you to divert calls from your own telephone number to any local, national or mobile number. Your calls follow you yet the caller is automatically transferred to your new location. So you can divert your office phone to your home office phone, or your home office phone to your mobile. And if you are out of touch, Call Answering or eircom's range of Answering Machines can take a message for you.

Eircom Chargecard

If you travel within Ireland or abroad, why not get a free eircom Chargecard. You can use this from virtually any phone – public, private or hotel – to make all your calls and have them billed, itemised free of charge to your telephone account or credit card. Not only does it save on costly payphone and hotel rates, but you save on the hassle of expense claims too.

Pagers/Cellular Messaging Service

Pagers connected to Eirpage gives nationwide coverage around the clock to ensure you can be contacted with a text or numeric message instantly. eircom supplies Philips and Motorola pagers. Why not use a pager in connection with your mobile (eircom's Cellular Messaging Service). Diverted calls are answered in your name and a written message sent to you.

Mobile phones

Eircell, Ireland's leading mobile phone provider, provides coverage nationwide and in over 50 countries worldwide. Whether you opt for Analogue (088) or GSM (087) coverage, eircom has a range of Nokia, Motorola, Philips, Siemens, Panasonic and Ericsson phones to suit your need and your budget. A range of Eirtime options include talk-time, and a variety of added services such as Playback, Eircell's 24-hour answering service, help you get the most from your phone. GSM phones also support mobile fax and data services, and EirText and EirOffice allowing you to send and receive when out and about.

Mobile Accessories

eircom sells a variety of accessories including batteries, cases, car chargers and also supplies and installs a variety of car kits.

Mobile Fax

When you need to send/ receive a hard copy right away, eircom's Mobile Fax fits in your briefcase and also offers scanning, copying and Internet capability.

Laptop

eircom's Laptop, including the highly renowned Compaq, which can be used while away from base. A PCMCIA card will let you use this together with your GSM phone

4. BACK AT BASE

To enable effective communications between the home office and the central site, there are a number of products and services which eircom can offer to make this easier.

Product Description

FreeFone

For nationwide access which is free to your staff and customers, why not set up a FreeFone number. For international coverage, choose International FreeFone

Call Management Services

To make it easier when communicating with staff out of the office, eircom's range of free connection and free rental Call Management Services can help. Leave messages in their mailbox with Call Answering. Alternatively, 3 Way calling is useful to set up simultaneous calls with 2 other people, all in different locations

Telephone Systems

Many of eircom's range of Telephone Systems can be configured to allow the caller access to the eworker using the same number whether in or out of the office. The eworker has the advantage of having the same functionality on their phone at home and in the office

Fax Machines

Many of eircom's fax machines allow for Broadcast Fax, enabling you to send the same message out to all your home office workers.

ISDN/Datcomms equipment

To enable your eworkers best access the LAN remotely and carry out effective information transfer, you'll need ISDN (basic – 2 channel or Primary – 30 channel) at your central site. eircom also sources and provides the Datacomms Equipment essentials including servers and routers from companies such as Lake, Nortel, Aspect, Sharp, Newbridge, Gandalf, Panasonic, MDS, Siemens and Cisco.

Videoconferencing

Save time and hassle and bring your team together with virtual meetings with remote colleagues over ISDN Videoconferencing. eircom provides a range of options: videophones, desktop units, and PC based units.

Eirtrade and Eircom.net

For Email and the Internet, eircom.net provides rapid cost effective communication. Eirtrade, Ireland's leading provider of Internet and Interactive service, also provides a full Internet and Intranet solution: with web design, installation and hosting all part of the service

Saving Money

eircom provides a range of discount schemes which can be extended to include home offices to maximise cost savings

Making Billing easier

Summary billing and billing analysis software allows you to allocate the costs of home offices. Itemised billing on telephone lines, FreeFone access and Chargecard free detailed billing allows for easier expenses claim handling

Repair Services

All equipment sold by eircom comes with a 12-month warranty while a range of enhanced and personalised maintenance plans are available for equipment including telephone systems, call centre equipment, datacomms equipment, telephone sets and mobile phones. For customers whose business is critically dependent on telephone service availability, eircom has introduced enhanced maintenance plans named ServicePlus. These offer guaranteed response times 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, a dedicated ServicePlus operator, regular progress updates and onsite support which can be customised to your needs.

Customer Consultancy

eircom's Customer Consultancy experts can work with you to design, install and support a customised solution for your information and communications technology requirements.

Contact List

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Disclaimer

This document outlines some of the issues an organisation should consider when introducing a eworking policy. While the document covers most of the main points it is not claimed to be comprehensive, nor should it be used exclusively when planning a eworking policy. In all cases you are advised to consult the appropriate experts in Human Resources, Health & Safety and Legal Matters before implementation. eircom and the Work Research Centre can take no responsibility for eworking policies in other organisations.

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