



500,000 subscribers for Bezeq's ADSL service

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In the past 12 months alone, approximately 250,000 surfers have joined ADSL

A few days ago, Bezeq passed the half-million mark for customers who surf the Internet with ADSL – Bezeq's high speed Internet service.

About 70% of all surfing households use broadband – a considerable increase compared with only 35% last year. According to a survey by Ernst & Young in mid-2003, this is one of the fastest-growing surfing publics in the world. In England, Italy, Germany and France, broadband is used by only about 10% of surfers, and in the U.S.A. by about 20%. Only in Hong Kong and Korea is the penetration rate higher than in Israel, where 35% of all households in those countries use broadband.

Bezeq checks regularly for the satisfaction of ADSL customers. All its surveys in the past year show a high level of customer satisfaction. – about 86% said they are pleased with the service. Among the advantages graded by the customers are surfing speed (54% of interviewees), no need for another telephone, always connected, less expensive than dial-up since payment is a fixed fee with no charge for surfing time. A similar survey in the business sector found comparable levels of customer satisfaction.

The CEO of the Bezeq Group, Amnon Dick, said that broadband is one of the main drivers of growth in the communications market. "I am pleased that Bezeq continues to lead the market, but to advance the broadband market further we have to bring the content to the customers and provide a whole range of services. Content is the dominant factor in the development of the broadband market, and will give customers real added value and lead to more and more people subscribing to the service," said Dick.

Pnina Shenhav, VP of Sales and Marketing at Bezeq, said that the profile of those who join ADSL is constantly changing. "ADSL has increased the market for Internet surfers dramatically. This is an important point to grasp. The number of surfers is growing all the time, and many of those who are joining had never used the Internet before. It's quite a revolution. Where most of those who signed up when the service was inaugurated were teenagers, computer "crazed" youngsters, today we are seeing young families, students and older people."

Another change observed in surfing habits is the average surfing time, which is rising steadily. The reasons for this are convenience, knowing that the price is fixed and unrelated to the amount of time spent surfing. "Obviously, the pleasure and the quality of the broadband sites encourage people to stay on the Internet longer," said Shenhav.

Bezeq is investing in the development and marketing of a range of ADSL-based products for the private and business sectors. For example, last year it offered ADSLNET services – a home network for surfing at several computers on one ADSL line, and Remote Access – for distance working on a broadband link to the Local Area Network in ADSL technology. In addition, Bezeq is running trials with YES for interactive television services on the ADSL network, for video on demand, games on demand and other services.