

Equinet Press Release: 18 July 2011

**Partnership Agreement Announced Between Equinet Ltd and leading ISP to Boost Primary School Internet Broadband Performance and Improve Security at Lower Cost**

Technology developer Equinet has announced that it has concluded an agreement with leading internet service provider Fast to provide bespoke security devices. The new units to be known as 'FastPilot' will be bundled with Fast's range of high speed broadband internet connectivity options sold into UK primary schools. This will allow Fast to offer a range of 'Secure Connectivity Solutions' that will typically be faster, more secure and cost schools far less than at present.

Fast is focusing evermore on vertical markets such as education to continue its rapid growth in provision of broadband connectivity. It has been supplying businesses and schools for the past twelve years. It has chosen to partner with Equinet who have complementary skills and expertise in security and caching devices – the company having supplied over 12,000 caching devices into UK schools over the last six years.

Equinet Managing Director, Keith Baker comments "Fast approached us to create a new device exclusively for them, designed specifically for the UK primary school market. I am sure the combination of their extensive high-speed broadband offerings coupled with our security and caching technology will provide a very cost-effective and capable package. We had heard excellent reviews regarding Fast's service provision and support – schools will find them a knowledgeable and professional company to deal with."

Mark Baker, Manager at Fast (no relation to Equinet's Keith Baker) explains "We are very aware of the rather unfortunate position primary schools have been left in after recent budget cuts have been imposed by local and central government. Many schools have lost technical support and advice from Local Authorities as well as connectivity and filtering services needing to be procured elsewhere. Despite the upheaval, we think this is a great opportunity for schools to update and improve services while reducing costs. With Equinet's help, we can offer primary schools the very latest technology in a very comprehensive package that will give them faster, more secure internet services – and most importantly without imposing long-term multi-year contracts."

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Recent research conducted by BESA\*, shows as many as 25% of primary schools have an internet connection offering a lowly performance of 2Mbps or less. An astonishing 45% of primary schools have only 4Mbps or less – meaning most home users are better served than the average primary school, which have a reported 46 PCs all contending for very limited bandwidth.

Keith Baker concludes “I think schools will be surprised by how much this new offering from Fast can improve services yet lower their costs. Undoubtedly, it will be welcome news to many schools in the current financial climate. We very much look forward to working with Fast on this and other projects.”

Complete ‘Secure Connectivity Solution’ packages from Fast, designed specifically for primary schools, start from as little as £120 per month. This includes all broadband connectivity, Becta approved internet filtering, advanced firewall security and caching; optional services include internet activity reporting, data backup and VoIP services.

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- **BESA ICT in UK State Schools 2010 summary report**

Download from: <http://www.besa.org.uk/besa/documents/view.jsp?item=1467>

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### **About Equinet**

Equinet was founded in 1998 and led the way in the development and supply of network devices giving schools the peace of mind and performance to make full use of the internet. Over 12,000 schools, numerous businesses and UK armed forces have deployed Equinet solutions in the intervening period.

Using the company's ability to deliver cost-effective, integrated hardware and software solutions in appliance format, Equinet will be making further announcements during 2011 concerning its new unified communications approach with its new maxim of 'intelligent integration' very much in mind.

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### **About Fast**

Fast is a leading UK ISP who are highly rated for quality of service, technical support and speed. They have been supplying internet access and hardware to businesses, consumers and schools via Broadband and Dialup technologies for 12 years.

Fast was established in 1999, and has grown into a strong and respected Internet Service Provider (ISP) with customers located throughout the UK. In 2009 Fast acquired Firenet Ltd., a Northern Ireland based broadband supplier. In 2010 Fast launched its Fibre (FTTC) and LLU services, expanding its product range in response to customer demand, and to remain at the forefront of new service provider technology.

In 2011 Fast is focusing on a number of vertical markets including education.

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