

[The broadband bargaining](#) [1]

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Rumbling along in the background is one of those little arguments which could end up being terribly expensive for all of us.

The argument itself is about whether to wire the whole country with fibre-optic cables so that we can all have high speed broadband. Or at least that's what is being said, should we or [shouldn't we](#) [3].

Moreover, because the study also found significant correlation between a nation's broadband quality and its advancement as a knowledge economy, policy makers may need to consider how to create an environment to improve key broadband performance parameters in the future.

Take that to be propaganda in favour of doing the rewiring...and not very good propaganda at that. As we all know, a correlation is not the same as causation. It could be (and I would certainly argue this) that a knowledge economy has more people who desire the high speed connection and thus more is invested to provide such.

But keep an eye on this issue, for the dance isn't really about whether or not to dig up all the roads. It's about who should pay for doing it. The cost is put at some £15 billion, some £600 and change per household.

The companies who would be piping HDTV or HD movies in real time down such a network very much want it to be built but of course don't want to pay for it. The broadband companies themselves don't want to pay for it either. But by painting the scheme as an essential part of the infrastructure of a modern economy they might be able to get us taxpayers to pay for it for them. That privatising profit and socialising costs thing.

Now it may actually be a good idea to build such a network: I've no view either way. I'm just interested in watching the public relations people positioning the idea as something that we should pay for whether it is a good idea or not, whether we do want it or not.

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