



INFORMATION

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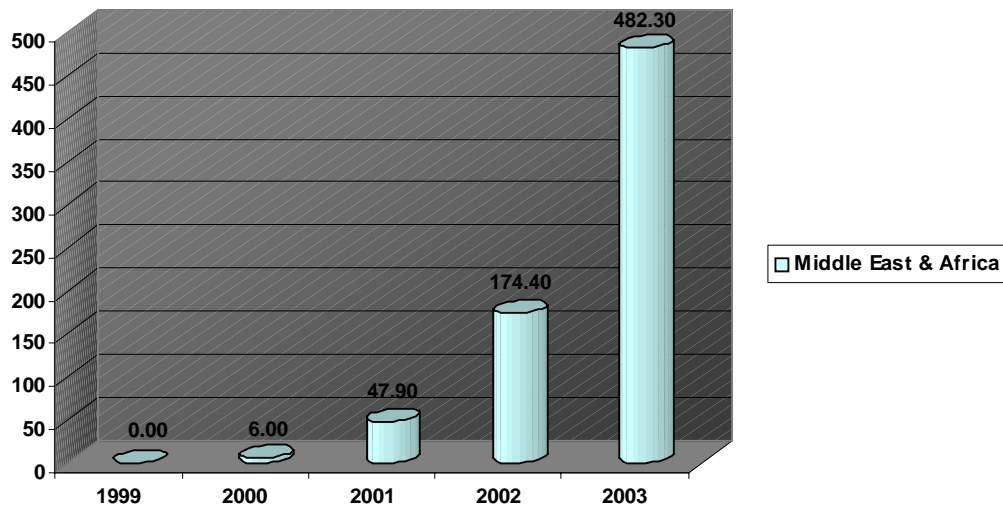
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Record Growth MEA – 1

RECORD GROWTH FOR BROADBAND DSL IN 2003 - 27.94 Million Extra Subscribers Deliver 78% Annual Growth - GLOBAL TOTAL REACHES CLOSE TO 64 MILLION

Almost 28 million more homes and businesses got wise to the benefits of broadband DSL in 2003 by subscribing to an always on, high-speed connection over their telephone line. That growth of 77.8% meant that the total number of DSL subscribers around the world reached 63.84 million at the end of December 2003, according to figures prepared by industry analyst firm, Point Topic for the international DSL Forum. The Middle East and Africa region now has over half a million subscribers to DSL services, a growth of 178% in the year.

**Growth of DSL Subscribers in Middle East & Africa (000s)
1999-2003**



At its meeting in Brussels this week [2-5 March 2004], the DSL Forum's president, Tom Starr said: "In the last three months of 2003 over nine million more customers signed up to the world's favourite broadband technology - the biggest ever quarterly growth. That 16.9% growth in the quarter is a level of performance any other sector would have been glad to achieve in the past year. Our market delivered that in just three months."

Even Tim Johnson from the analyst firm Point Topic that specialises in the broadband market, found his prediction for the year-end was exceeded by almost two million subscribers. “China is storming ahead and now has the largest DSL population in the world at 10.95 million, even excluding Hong Kong, pushing Japan into second place with 10.27 million and the USA into third place with 9.12 million,” he said.

Global Ranking	Country	DSL Subscribers 31 December 2003	DSL per 100 phone lines 31 December 2003
1	China	10,950,000	5.1
2	Japan	10,272,052	14.4
3	USA	9,119,000	4.8
4	South Korea	6,435,955	27.7
5	Germany	4,500,000	8.4
6	France	3,262,700	9.6
7	Taiwan	2,800,000	21.4
8	Italy	2,280,000	8.3
9	Canada	2,170,243	10.9
10	UK	1,820,230	5.2

Israel, where commercial broadband DSL services began first in the region, continues to represent the majority of subscribers at 380,000 – a growth of 153% in the year. It has the largest penetration of phone lines delivering DSL services in the region at 12.3% and ranks eighth in the world by this key industry measure. The international DSL Forum has set a global target of 20% penetration by the end of 2005.

Global Ranking 31 December 2003	Country	DSL Subscribers 31 December 2003	Telephone lines 2001/02 (ITU)	DSL per 100 phone lines 31 December 2003
1	South Korea	6,435,955	23,257,000	27.7
2	Taiwan	2,800,000	13,099,416	21.4
3	Hong Kong	690,000	3,842,943	18.0
4	Belgium	789,677	5,132,427	15.4
5	Japan	10,272,052	71,149,000	14.4
6	Denmark	473,481	3,739,247	12.7
7	Singapore	242,000	1,927,200	12.6
8	Israel	380,000	3,100,000	12.3
9	Finland	336,600	2,850,000	11.8
10	Canada	2,170,243	19,962,072	10.9

Bahrain, a new entrant to the market in 2003, has already achieved 3.4% of its phone lines delivering broadband DSL services. The United Arab Emirates grew its subscriber numbers 42% in the year and has reached 2.1% penetration. Saudi Arabia and Turkey each grew over 1,000% with 0.3% of their phone lines delivering DSL services by the end of 2003.

Worldwide, not even mobile phones experienced such exponential growth as broadband DSL has been achieving. The growth figures in 2003, which outstrip those of the heyday of mobile phone sales, indicate that DSL will continue to extend its lead as the world's number one broadband technology in 2004. As more countries begin commercial deployment of broadband DSL over standard phone lines each quarter, delivering an even wider variety of DSL services to meet next generation requirements, the Forum expects consumers and businesses alike to increasingly recognise that the technology is becoming as essential as electricity.

Tom Starr explains: "We are confident that the industry is well on the way to achieving the DSL Forum's global target of 200 million DSL subscribers – 20% of all phone lines – by the end of 2005, with at least one country in every region reaching that target. Our technical and marketing teams will be continuing their work - developing guidelines and best practice, and educating end users – to accelerate growth and ensure that DSL maintains its position as the world's leading broadband technology."

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About the DSL Forum

The DSL Forum is an international industry consortium of over 200 leading service providers, equipment manufacturers and other interested parties, focused on developing the full potential of broadband DSL to meet the needs of the mass market. With the established goal of 200 million customers by year end 2005, DSL Forum works to streamline processes, develop specifications and share best practices that set the stage for effective deployments, and explosive global DSL growth. By developing new standards and embracing new applications, DSL Forum is tailoring DSL to meet the needs of the next generation of multi-media services and the online community. Established in 1994, more information about the DSL Forum is available from its industry site www.dslforum.org. Information tailored to end-users is available on www.dsllife.com.

DSL – more than a phone line – it's a global solution.

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