

# Press Releases - E-Commerce Obstructions - 17/03/00

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**Ireland continues to fall behind in Internet Stakes According to Eoin Costello** *"Today's announcement from Cable TV and Telephone Company NTL UK that it would launch the UK's first totally free service in April illustrates how far we are behind the Internet market leaders."*

The company said subscribers to the service - to be called ntlworld - would pay no subscription fee, no fee for connection to the net and no telephone call charges. *"It is worrying that many of the Irish players offering "free" Internet access are making their profits from a share of the call charges. The model companies in the UK are now following is to recoup their costs from ecommerce. This then drives ecommerce initiatives thereby offering choice to the consumer."*

One of the disadvantages to Irish companies setting up on the net is the cost involved for their potential customers in using the Internet. In America it costs approximately £26 to surf the web for 5 hours a day, 20 days a month. In Ireland the cost of similar use would probably be in excess of £250.

Barclay Knapp, chief executive of NTL, said: *"ntlworld will help the UK in a drive to lead the world in making e-commerce, e-entertainment and e-education available to everyone."*

According to Eoin Costello *"If we are serious about ecommerce in this country no per second charges and no ISP charges are the way to go. Any system that charges customers for using the Internet is anti ecommerce. So far the Minister for Public Enterprise has concentrated on bringing broad band access into this country. Now it is time for her to focus on free access for retail customers if we are to truly embrace ecommerce. I would urge the Minister to adopt a mission statement such as Tony Blair's, who has pledged that every British citizen will have unhampered access to the web within five years."*