Defence on the road to smarter working

The Ministry of Defence is preparing to launch a secure telecommunications service that will enable MoD personnel – for the first time – to conduct e-Business away from the workplace.

The key enabler is a highly-specified Remote Access (RA) facility, which will be delivered under the existing Defence Fixed Telecommunication Service (DFTS) contract, a £1bn private finance initiative deal that is designed to run until 2007. The new service has been developed by BT Defence and BT Ignite Solutions. The smart solution was in engineering the Remote Access connectivity on to the existing DFTS RESTRICTED LAN Interconnect (RLI) service, a high-speed, MoD-wide IT platform that hosts a range of applications, including email and intranet, for defence people.

The new remote access – RLI RA – service will be launched in January 2002, and it will include the facility for international call access. John Rees, BT Defence Business Development Manager, says: “It is one of the most significant, ground-breaking communications services to be provided to the MoD since the DFTS contract was signed in July 1997.”

RLI RA is an important driver in positioning the MoD in the electronic age. It will empower users to work remotely and more efficiently, as this and other flexible working initiatives are introduced.

Clearly, an electronically linked defence environment that enables the freedom to work away from the office will offer MoD personnel more flexibility in their day-to-day work patterns.

Such technology provided under DFTS will bring the MoD in line with the smart businesses in the commercial world, in which MoD employees can truly be free to work virtually anywhere, with the confidence its communications are safe and secure. This, together with the other services already running under the DFTS programme, will put the MoD further along the path in meeting its modernising challenges and e-Business objectives for a joined-up government.

The remote access element employs proven technology based on BT’s commercial MobileWorks, which is already used by thousands of people in both public and private sectors.

The RLI RA service is managed by BT Ignite Solutions, and under the provision it will offer a choice of usage-based tariff or monthly payment scheme, with contract periods of two or three years.