

The background is a dark space filled with vibrant, multi-colored light trails in shades of green, yellow, orange, and blue. These trails flow and swirl across the frame, creating a sense of dynamic movement and energy. In the lower right corner, a small, detailed purple and white flower is visible, adding a naturalistic element to the otherwise abstract composition.

[GLOBAL COMMUNICATIONS



Ann Beynon

Global Communications

Ann Beynon, Director of British Telecom Wales

It was Abraham Lincoln in the 1860s who first cottoned on to the power of the word global. 'Illinois must go global' is what he said when he was the State's representative to the US Congress. Going global is easier today than it has ever been. Digital communications have made it so.

We take for granted devices such as computers, the World Wide Web, mobile phones, mobile broadband, and digital, interactive TV. We buy our food and holidays online, we communicate with our friends with ease on Facebook and Twitter, we upload digital images from our digital cameras and email them to friends and family, we find our way to new and interesting places using our satellite navigation systems. We can do all this sitting in bed at home, sitting on a park bench or sitting on the beach – if weather permits.

For business the impact of global communications has been transformational. It is not, however, the mere existence of these technologies in themselves that matters—it is how they are applied. The economic prosperity and social well being of nations and communities depends upon the effective use of global communications. Health services are underpinned by the ability to access and share digital images to help the early diagnosis of illnesses. Universities and colleges increasingly provide their teaching materials online and make that educational content ever more compelling. Businesses transact, procure, train their people, and comply with statutory regulations online. Governments impart information, provide access to key services, and provide access to elected representatives online.

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Increasingly we are improving our understanding of how issues critical to the well being of our globe depend on global communications. At a recent climate change summit in Cardiff we heard directly from Pen Hadow, the Arctic explorer, on a direct link from the Arctic circle how serious a problem global warming has become. How powerful that message was thanks to the technology that transmitted the message and the technology that monitors and reports those critical climatic changes.

Nothing has underlined the impact of global communications more than the current economic downturn. Technology made it easier for financial transaction to happen on such an enormous scale and with such rapidity. Technology facilitated the heated global debate that followed when it all went wrong. Technology, however, has to be seen as the way out. There is no point shooting the messenger or damning the medium.

Wales is well placed to leverage global communications technologies to emerge stronger after the current crisis. Wales, like the UK, has the most competitive telecommunications market-place in Europe. Telecommunications prices have reduced by 54% since 1990. Wales has broadband availability to 99% of the population and take up of over 50% in many rural areas. Cardiff will soon see the deployment of new fibre services providing up to 40mgbt/s in large parts of the city. BT's new 21st century network is underpinning many of these new services and South East Wales is the first part of the UK to experience significant roll out of new digital voice services on that new network. This sets the scene for innovation and the transformation of how we create wealth and prosperity for the future. That, allied to skills and training and a welcoming environment for businesses to flourish, is how Wales will go global!

Thriving in a difficult climate

Huw Roberts, Director of Welsh Affairs, Royal Mail Group

Despite the severe economic downturn and further falls in mail volumes, Royal Mail Group was able to announce recently—for the first time in almost 20 years—that all of the Group business units are in profit—no mean feat in today's recession-hit climate.



Our services benefit people in all walks of life—from the postman delivering letters through the door in towns and villages across Wales, to subpostmasters offering more than 170 different products and services, via our network of 1,000 Post Office branches in Wales.]



We are however facing huge challenges, competing with electronic communications, as well as with other postal operators. The prediction that the accelerating structural decline in mail markets around the world is expected to decrease mail volumes by around seven per cent by 2010, is a worrying trend.

The company and its people have come a long way since 2002, when Royal Mail was losing more than £1 million a day and routinely failing quality of service targets. Determinedly, however, we are now getting on with our modernisation plans and catching up on decades of under-investment.

Modernisation of our Letters operation, including the latest advanced "intelligent" letter sorting machinery, recently installed in our Cardiff and Chester Mail Centres, has contributed to the automated handling of almost 80 per cent of our total mail volumes.

Royal Mail drivers across Wales and the rest of the UK are equipped with hand-held scanners, which read barcodes on Special Delivery and other tracked mail, allowing us to provide electronic confirmation of delivery within minutes.

The modernisation plan, agreed with our shareholder, the Government, has already involved spending £600 million and plans are in place to spend every penny of the £1.2 billion commercial loan by 2011.

This is why we must now step up the pace at which we are transforming Royal Mail. The challenges from competition and the structural decline in the mail market are growing, not diminishing. We are making progress, but we still have much to do in order to secure the future of the one-price-goes-anywhere universal service to the UK's 28 million addresses—and to the 1.5 million doorsteps here in Wales.

Supporting Welsh Economy and Culture

We are also contributing to the economy and culture here in Wales, through continuing support for the arts, the language and the Welsh culture, demonstrated in a variety of corporate social responsibility measures.

We are a major supporter of the Arts in Wales, with sponsorship of Business in the Community, Arts and Business Cymru, the National and Urdd Eisteddfodau, the International Eisteddfod, the BBC National Orchestra of Wales and the Royal Welsh Show.

As a major employer in Wales—with 10,000 people working across our businesses of Royal Mail, Post Office® and Parcelforce Worldwide—we are committed to ensuring we act as a responsible organisation, earning the trust of our employees, customers and stakeholders.

We encourage our people to become involved in the Welsh community and reward them for their efforts with our annual Royal Mail First Class Awards for postmen and women who "go the extra mile" and in our People's Post Office® Awards, which recognise the community spirit and business enterprise of the people who run Post Office retail outlets.

Our services benefit people in all walks of life—from the postman delivering letters through the door in towns and villages across Wales, to subpostmasters offering more than 170 different products and services, via our network of nearly 1,000 Post Office branches in Wales.

Royal Mail in Wales accepts the responsibility of our role and actively promotes the fact that the quality of all our lives depends on the strength and optimism of the society in which we operate.



Mail drum



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