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D A N T E

P R E S S R E L E A S E - 6 October 1995

BT launches EuropaNET backbone for DANTE

On 1 October 1995 BT launched the successor of EMPB, the Western European backbone component of EuropaNET, DANTE's international network service for the European R&D community. EuropaNET was first launched in October 1992 and is 'the' network for the R&D community in Europe. DANTE awarded a 7 MECU contract for the replacement of the previous backbone to BT in May 1995. BT has built the network, tailored to DANTE's requirements, in four months.

Through EuropaNET DANTE offers researchers an efficient and cost-effective infrastructure to communicate and collaborate with fellow researchers abroad, and to collect and exchange the most up-to-date information in their research area. In addition to the backbone the EuropaNET service includes global connectivity, gateways to other European networks and connectivity to Central and Eastern European countries.

Under the contract, BT provides access services at speeds up to 8 Mbps to more than 20 European research and education networks. DANTE integrates the backbone service with the rest of EuropaNET, monitors and reports on the quality of service delivered, plans for network changes and upgrades together with BT and acts as interface between BT and DANTE's customer networks.

Dai Davies, general manager of DANTE said: "Through this new infrastructure we offer our customers, who are among the most advanced user communities in Europe, a high quality, highly reliable network. The users shouldn't have noticed any change at all as our efforts during the past few months have focused entirely on making sure that the transition on 1 October would pass smoothly and trouble-free. We are pleased with the successful result of this challenging transition."

BT expects to launch its own International Transit Internet Service in early spring 1996, of which the backbone provided to DANTE is a major element.