

## And the winners are

Written by David Brunnen  
Monday, 21 November 2011 09:01

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The results of NextGen Challenge were announced last week.



The occasion, a dinner in Bristol as part of the NextGen 11 conference and exhibition, was reported as a great success.

There could of course only be a [single winner in each of the competition's three categories](#) but in a broader sense there are many winners – not just the short-listed finalists or even all those who were emboldened to enter the fray.

The winners are the customers - all those businesses and public sector organisations and ordinary families where the everyday load of working and living is being transformed by the myriad attempts to deliver better online access.

You might say that this doesn't add up to much – and in aggregate there's no denying that the UK has far to go – but that is not how the customers and beneficiaries of these NextGen Challenge entrants see the world. For them the prospect of better broadband is making a world of difference.

Beyond this there is yet another layer of winners – those who have yet to benefit from the experience of 'first-movers', pioneers and the brave souls who are determined to innovate. These are the businesses created and sustained, the new jobs in unlikely places, the simplification of dealing with organisations, the prospects of innovative locally-relevant services and the general empowerment of people to get on with life.

This was just the first year of NextGen Challenge. No-one could be sure it would produce the great examples that have won through. The competition in 2012 will surely highlight more brilliant achievements – and, like the old ecommerce awards of the 1990's, the growing pile of case studies will hold many lessons for those intent on studying the transformation of society through the growth of better broadband and the future realization that much is dependent on the quality of that access.

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We are fortunate in the UK that we do not need to look far for vital clues on the sorts of demand for broadband access that we can expect. The 2011 Community Study Tours to Sweden were just one of many opportunities to explore and share the experiences amongst our European neighbours – and as that programme looks yet further afield there will be yet more discoveries to come.

The winners of NextGen Challenge 2011 deserve our congratulations. The more stones thrown into this pond the greater the ripples at the edges.

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Full results of NextGen Challenge can be viewed [here](#) .

Details of Community Study Tours are described in the editorial ['Growing Stronger Communities'](#) .

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