



THE BRITISH LIBRARY

96 Euston Road
London
NW1 2DB

T +44 (0)20 7412 7000
www.bl.uk

THE WORLD'S KNOWLEDGE

Heather Brooke

15 November 2004

Dear Ms Brooke

Further to your letter requesting information on the British Library WiFi project I am able to supply you with the following information:

1 The British Library (BL) has a contractual agreement with Building Zones Ltd (BZ) for provision of a WiFi service to users of the BL. BZ has a separate contract with their main sub-contractor, who is the internet service provider. Both contracts include commercially sensitive information that could compromise the commercial standing of BZ and a third party, BZ's sub-contractor. We have discussed this matter with BZ and we cannot agree to the release of this information.

WiFi in the UK is a highly competitive arena, and the contract agreement with the BL sets out in great detail a truly innovative business model, one that both BZ and their sub-contractor do not wish to release into the market at large. Additionally, BZ has a confidentiality agreement with both the BL and their sub-contractor, written into the contract agreements with each party.

Some background to the project might help illuminate the reasons for not releasing the contract to you:

BZ originally approached the BL with an innovative commercial proposition whereby Building Zones would project manage and deliver a WiFi service for BL users at no cost to the BL, and with minimal BL staff input (both project management and engineering).

Because BZ is not an internet service provider, a key aspect of their proposition was their management of a tender process to select the most competitive internet service provider as their sub-contractor for the BL service.

Because the proposal from BZ rested on BZ and the BL sharing any resulting revenue from the WiFi service, BZ was driven to find the best deal from an ISP on the open market (see point 2 below).

It is important to note that the contract agreement between Building Zones and the BL does not include any payment to Building Zones.

BZ made their proposition at a time when no other private sector organisation was willing or able to do the same. The BL for its part was excited by the prospect of adding a much-wanted service for its users, at no cost to the public purse.

John de Lucy
Head of Estates & Facilities
T +44 (0)20 7412 7177 E john.delucy@bl.uk

