

## Background

The concept of a dark-fibre testbed to support Photonics and Optical systems research was included from the outset of the UKLight programme when this was being conceived in 2002. At that point the [UK e-Science programme](#) [1] was already well established, and one of the aims of the dark-fibre testbed was to encourage interaction between research groups at all levels, from optical systems through network research and computing science to e-science application groups.

Initial emphasis within the UKLight project was to deploy a circuit oriented network to enable project groups with demanding network requirements to interconnect key locations with dedicated network capacity, a concept which has now matured into the [Janet Lightpath service](#) [2]. However, following more detailed proposals and discussions within the UKLight Steering Committee and the [JISC Support for Research Committee](#) [3], Janet (or UKERNA as the company was known then), was given approval to proceed with a procurement for the dark-fibre infrastructure in July 2006. The procurement process concluded in late 2006, with [ntl:Telewest Business](#) [4] being selected as preferred supplier in January 2007.

During the following months, fibre-characterisation tests were undertaken by consultants to the suppliers to confirm that the fibres being offered were of a sufficiently high quality to meet the requirements of the photonics research groups. Having obtained satisfactory results from the test phase, a contract to provide the dark fibre infrastructure was signed with the supplier in June 2007. Deployment proceeded and Janet accepted the infrastructure on 3rd December 2007 after final comprehensive (end to end) fibre characterisation tests demonstrated that the installation met the requirements.

Janet has subsequently installed equipment racks, power management systems and telecommunications access to enable the researchers to install and manage their equipment at these locations.

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**Source URL:** <https://community-stg.jisc.ac.uk/library/background>

### Links

[1] <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/escience/default.htm>

[2] <http://www.ja.net/services/lightpath/index.html>

[3] <http://www.jisc.ac.uk/aboutus/committees/subcommittees/jsr.aspx>

[4] <http://www.ntltelewestbusiness.co.uk/>