

Pigeon faster than broadband

EMILY MILLER
IN DURBAN

A SOUTH African company is to start using a carrier pigeon to transfer data between its offices - because bosses believe it will be quicker than broadband.

IT experts at a financial services firm say it takes up to six hours to transfer four gigabytes of encrypted data between two of its offices which are 75km apart.

Staff will save valuable time by instead having the information transported by a homing pigeon named Winston.

Workers will attach a memory

card containing the data to the bird's leg and let nature take its course.

Experts believe the specially-trained 11-month-old bird will complete the flight in just 45 minutes - and at a fraction of the cost.

Unlimited Group boss Kevin Rolfe said: "It might sound crazy in this day and age, but we're always looking for new ways to move our business forward and we think this might just work.

"For years we've struggled with the internet as a method of communication. It's fine for emails and correspondence, but we need to transfer a lot of data from one office

to another and find that it quite often lets us down.

"To send four gigabytes of encrypted information takes around six hours on a good day. If we get bad weather and the service goes down then it can take up to two days to get through.

"We started looking at other ways to solve the problem and discovered that carrier pigeons could do the job a lot quicker."

If the first pigeon flight is a success, bosses say they will employ Winston and some of his feathered friends to make a weekly trip between the firm's two offices.