

3.3 RECOGNITION OF BROADBAND FOR SOCIAL BENEFITS AND INCLUSION

The Internet and the more sophisticated applications that it supports in health, education, public services, employment, business, and personal services has the potential to transform society and increase the quality of life. Broadband drives more intense and productive use of ICT (Information and Communications Technology) resulting in greater online content applications and services. It facilitates greater inclusion within a society by reducing the impact of distance and the constraints of living in rural and remote areas.

As was noted in the report by the U.K. Broadband Stakeholder Group established to advise the national Government:

"We believe that societies that adopt, adapt and absorb the benefits of broadband enabled ICT, services and applications quickly and deeply will achieve significant benefits in terms of productivity, innovation, growth and quality of life as well as significant competitive advantage over societies that don't." [ix]

Broadband has the potential to enable businesses and the public sector to improve the delivery of services and subsequently reduce costs. The benefits are seen in all areas including health, education, public safety and administration, work, business, and social inclusion. Some of the major applications that are currently being used are telemedicine, teleworking, e-government, distance learning, public safety, tourism, and e-business.[x]

In Grant County, Washington, the Grant County Public Utilities District has deployed a Local Open Access Network (Loan) using FTTH architecture that has resulted in significant social and economic benefits to the County. Improvements in the delivery of medical information, increased applications by the schools for distance education delivery, and use by the agricultural community for livestock and crop research have been some of the benefits identified.[xi] The City of Brighton, England, through a private public partnership agreement deployed a wireless metropolitan intranet (Brighton Wireless Metranet) that covers the City, connects all public buildings, and provides high-speed Internet services to thousands of students that previously did not have broadband access.

AllCoNet deployed by local government and not-for-profit organisations in Allegany County, Maryland, has grown from a wireless network designed to meet the educational needs of the County to an open access network that serves all residents, businesses and government organisations with attendant social and economic benefits.[xii] The City of Pirai, Brazil, has established a wireless network to provide broadband access to all public facilities to improve the provision of public services. In South Africa, the Municipality of Tshwane and the City of Johannesburg have deployed fibre backbone networks for a similar purpose.

[<- previous chapter](#) | [next chapter ->](#)

REFERENCES

[ix] Broadband Stakeholder Group, "The Impact of Broadband-Enabled ICT, Content, Applications and Services on the UK Economy and Society to 2010", 24 September 2004.

[http://www.broadbanduk.org/news/news_pdfs/Sept%202004/
BSG Phase 2 BB Impact BackgroundPaperSept04\(1\).pdf](http://www.broadbanduk.org/news/news_pdfs/Sept%202004/BSG_Phase_2_BB_Impact_BackgroundPaperSept04(1).pdf)

[x] Singer, M. (2002), "The Economic and Social Benefits of Broadband", Telecommunications Industry Association (US) for Question 20/2: Examination of access technologies for broadband communications, August 27, 2002.

http://www.tiaonline.org/policy/broadband/TIA_Contribution_for_ITU-D_20-2_on_Broadband_8-27.pdf

[xi] *ibid*

[xii] Tanner, T. "Moving Beyond Wireless Broadband to Carrier Grade Infrastructure", Presentation Slides.
http://www.wcai.com/pdf/2005/05presentations/Tanner_Todd.pdf