Community Connectivity: A getting started checklist

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First Nations Technology Council

Community Connectivity: A getting started checklist

Using what we have learned so far, the First Nations Tech Council have started a Getting Started Checklist to inform communities building connectivity. This check list is meant to be responsive to experience and we will update it to incorporate new information and ideas. We encourage Knowledge Network community members to share their thoughts in the survey linked at the bottom of the page. Here is a list of ideas to start thinking about bringing high speed broadband connectivity to your community:

Assess:
- Familiarize yourself with the terminology and technology associated with connectivity.
- Look at what levels of broadband you need.
- Look at what type of services are available for your area.
- Find a community advocate. Someone who can develop the technical expertise and push the project forward.
- Look into leveraging Health and Education access as a proponent of connectivity. Connectivity allows remote community's access to Telehealth and distance education services that would not otherwise be available. Remote consultation and videoconferencing with physicians and specialists are made possible with broadband connectivity.
- Decide if you want to be your own Internet Service Provider (ISP) or if you want to be a customer and/or partner.
    - Advantages of being your own ISP include: Control of deployments, pricing policies, priorities and further planning.
    - Difficulties of being your own ISP include: Possessing the technical and financial capacity to deploy, maintaining and managing the service.

Secure:
- To support long-term high-speed Internet in your community secure access to technologies, funding and local capacity. Sustainable connectivity projects enable community service applications such as education and health, economic development, and culture and language.
- Right of way and Rights and Title have been identified as areas that need to be carefully considered when entering agreements with Internet Service Providers. Signing a telecommunication agreement is subject to Rights and Title and these agreements can affect these rights in the long term.

Build:

- o Ensure that the Internet service that you build is scalable to accommodate the increasing demands of Internet use. For example, fibre optic Internet can be scaled upward but copper and wireless solutions are limited to how far and how much they can carry.
- o Consider building and operating a community network model that allows access to affordable circuits and services.
- o Installing and maintaining systems requires a sustainable business model and cash flow.

Support:

- o Support the development of local capacity, economic and employment opportunities to ensure that connectivity capacity is locally maintained.
- o Ensure members are trained to build and manage community-run solutions.
- o Secure resources to support qualified, affordable, accessible local technical support services.

Are we missing something? Do you have experience and/or resources that would be useful to other First Nation communities? We would love to hear from you! We are dedicated to providing the most accurate, timely and useful information possible. Please click below to share your thoughts with us.

Link to a survey to share your expertise with the FNBC Knowledge Network