



DIGITAL STRATEGY A Road Map to Digital Leadership

Executive Summary



Enhance. Expand. Empower.



EORN
EASTERN ONTARIO
REGIONAL NETWORK

Vision, Mission and Values

Vision

By 2024, Eastern Ontario will be recognized as one of the world's most digitally connected rural regions, where citizens, businesses, and public services fully embrace and harness the potential of high-speed broadband.

Mission

EORN will promote and develop access to high-speed broadband and other technologies, which will create wealth; expand employment and education; and enhance quality of life throughout the region.

Core Values

- Innovation: EORN will seek out innovative approaches and technologies to help improve productivity for our stakeholders.
- Leverage: EORN will invest in projects that leverage contributions and collaboration with other partners and result in clear social or financial returns.
- Partnership: EORN will continue to build successful partnerships and collaborate with all levels of government; the broader public sector; and the private sector.
- Regional Orientation: EORN will focus on regional priorities that deliver benefits to all of Eastern Ontario.



Message from the EOWC Chair

More than seven years ago, the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus (EOWC) recognized the importance of broadband connectivity to the future of our region. We also recognized that there were a range of regulatory, technical and financial barriers that stood in our way. In response, the EOWC came together and developed an action plan to build the partnerships and access the resources needed to overcome these barriers. The result is a \$170-million broadband network that was built with the support of local, provincial and federal governments and the private sector.

The Eastern Ontario Regional Network (EORN) is a critical, foundational tool that will help the EOWC roll out our regional economic development strategy. EORN will help us remove barriers to growth and create the positive conditions needed to advance our regional economy.

At the heart of the matter, both the EOWC Economic Development Strategy and EORN's Digital Strategy seek to empower our residents with the means to realize their potential and live their dreams. Through our collective efforts and individual successes, our region will prosper.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'E' and 'D' followed by a long horizontal line.

Eric Duncan
Chair, Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus



Message from the EORN Chair

The Eastern Ontario Regional Network (EORN) has spent the last four years building the digital infrastructure needed to support our communities for many years to come. This was the first, critical step towards linking rural Eastern Ontario to a global economy that demands connectivity and speed. Now, we are planning to build on our success to ensure that the region's residents, businesses and public institutions harness the network to deliver results.

Thanks to the work of EORN, more than 415,000 homes and businesses can access broadband speeds of at least 10 Mbps. Sixty-two key commercial areas and business parks throughout the region have new enterprise-level fibre connectivity.

This 10-year Digital Strategy maps out our plan to leverage and build on this network to create thriving local economies and improved quality of life for our residents.

EORN will continue to build on the strengths that helped us deliver results during the first phase of the project. We will retain our strong regional focus. We will also maintain our emphasis on working in partnership with governments, communities and the private sector. Our success will depend on all parties continuing to collaborate towards our common goals.

Through this long-term strategy, EORN will provide regional leadership in improving broadband access and in promoting the adoption of technologies by individuals, businesses, governments and organizations across Eastern Ontario.

We thank our partners across the public and private sectors for their support and cooperation. Together, we will continue to take the region "further and faster" by enhancing and expanding on the success that has been achieved to date to empower the residents of Eastern Ontario.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "DR Burton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

David Burton
Chair, Eastern Ontario Regional Network

Introduction

Since it was established by the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus (EOWC) five years ago, the Eastern Ontario Regional Network (EORN) has substantially increased broadband access across rural Eastern Ontario by working in partnership with all levels of government and the private sector.

The organization has created a 10-year Digital Strategy to build on its success and to ensure that the broadband network fulfils its potential to deliver economic growth and improved quality of life to Eastern Ontario communities.

The network today

EORN built an extensive high-capacity fibre optic backhaul network across the region. This backbone in turn connects to nearly two dozen local access networks that provide wired or fixed wireless broadband access to about 90 per cent of the homes and businesses in Eastern Ontario.

The organization supplemented this network by negotiating improved satellite packages to reach those parts of the region that it could not otherwise connect. It also built fibre services to more than 60 business parks and core business areas across the region.

Through this project, EORN gained partners' trust and credibility by developing effective solutions that were based on sound data analysis and evidence.



Why create a Digital Strategy?

To create a digitally connected region, Eastern Ontario needs not just broadband access, but also the skills and capacity to use technology effectively. This Digital Strategy offers a road map for the region to embrace the economic and social benefits of internet-based tools to create strong, successful communities.

The strategy is based on the latest research and understanding of the digital economy, as well as EORN's own local experience and success in building rural broadband services. It also fits within the larger context of both Eastern Ontario and Canada.

Nationally, there is broad understanding that while Canadians are active internet users, our businesses lag behind other nations in embracing e-commerce and other online platforms.

The federal government has launched *Digital Canada 150*, a strategy that aims to improve broadband access, support development of the tech sector and help businesses embrace digital technologies. It includes several funding programs that could help Eastern Ontario achieve its own digital goals.

Within Eastern Ontario, EORN's Digital Strategy works in tandem with the regional economic development strategy unveiled last year by the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus (EOWC). That strategy identifies three key priorities:

- workforce development and deployment;
- technology integration and innovation; and,
- integrated and intelligent transportation systems.

While named specifically as a priority, technology is also integral to achieving the strategy's other objectives. EORN has already begun work with the EOWC and other stakeholders on several new initiatives that help the region move forward on its economic development goals.

Partner-based strategy

EORN will continue to seek out strategic partnerships with organizations that share its goals and priorities. This will involve working with internet service providers, businesses, economic development groups, non-profit groups and those who deliver public services. EORN will also continue to seek opportunities for support from the provincial and federal governments, where funding programs are a good fit.

By collaborating with a broad range of stakeholders, EORN can ensure that the region keeps pace with the digital economy and fulfils its mission.



Goals

GOAL 1: Increase User Uptake

Working with private and public sector partners, EORN will promote the adoption of high-speed internet services and digital technology across Eastern Ontario by residents, businesses and public institutions.

GOAL 2: Improve Broadband Access

Driven by the perpetual demand for higher speed and more capacity, EORN will leverage the existing broadband network in Eastern Ontario to expand and enhance fixed and mobile broadband access throughout the region.

GOAL 3: Demonstrate Technology Leadership

EORN will investigate, develop and promote the adoption of new technologies that support wealth creation, job growth and educational opportunities.

Strategic Approach

EORN will achieve its goals using three proven approaches that have served the organization and region well to date:

Advocacy:

The EOWC and EORN are trusted by stakeholders to develop evidence-based solutions for the region's economic and social challenges. EORN will continue to advocate for initiatives based on strong local knowledge and sound data.

Investment:

EORN will continue to invest strategically in areas where it can leverage the contributions from others to achieve more than it could alone.

Mobilization:

Whenever possible, EORN will work to mobilize diverse groups of stakeholders throughout the region to work together on shared goals and objectives of the Digital Strategy. EORN will not duplicate the efforts of other groups and organizations. In fact, others may take the lead on specific initiatives that emerge out of the Digital Strategy.

Focus Areas

EORN will achieve its goals by focusing on four key areas:

Regional Economic Development

EORN will work with Eastern Ontario businesses, not-for-profit organizations and public institutions to develop innovative ways to use the new broadband network as a springboard for increased wealth and job creation.

In particular, we will focus on ways to connect businesses to in-region and out-of-region markets, secure increased sales and business revenues, and increase efficiency. EORN will also work on strengthening the access and quality of labour market intelligence to address the needs of businesses and individuals.

This will foster economic growth in the form of improved regional GDP and productivity, better jobs and higher personal incomes. These benefits will help to build a stronger residential and commercial property tax base that supports more sustainable communities.

Municipal Services

EORN will help Eastern Ontario municipalities use internet-based applications to improve service levels, better manage the costs of delivering vital public services, and engage citizens in local government. The strategy identifies opportunities such as training, shared services and new application development that would support these goals and create more responsive local governments with improved citizen satisfaction.

Broadband Education

Individuals with new access to broadband may not realize the many ways in which it can be used to improve their lives and prepare them for our changing world – both globally and locally. Through educational and training programs, EORN will help Eastern Ontarians learn how to use the new regional broadband network, and will pursue network applications to reduce social isolation, improve education and skills, and improve personal/household prosperity.

This delivers direct benefits through reduced spending on social programs, as well as indirect benefits in the form of higher employment levels, stronger household incomes, and an increased property tax base.

Infrastructure (Fixed & Mobile)

EORN has successfully built a \$170-million fixed broadband network that meets the speed and capacity demands of Eastern Ontarians today, with capacity to grow in the future. However, there is still work to be done to ensure that the current infrastructure is fully scaled and expanded upon to meet the needs of citizens in 2024. This includes building off the current network to increase mobile access in the future.



Strategy Overview

ACTIVITIES BY GOAL			
Focus Areas	Increase User Uptake	Improve Broadband Access	Demonstrate Technology Leadership
Regional Economic Development	<p>Improve access to quality labour market intelligence.</p> <p>Promote availability of investment supports for a wide range of local businesses and organizations.</p>	<p>Promote Eastern Ontario as a “connected,” “tech savvy” or “innovative” rural region.</p> <p>Promote positive economic impact of high-speed broadband to the economic development community.</p>	<p>Develop a competition with a cash prize for technology companies to develop practical tech solutions for challenges faced by citizens in the region.</p> <p>Participate and provide seed co-funding for new infrastructure or commercialization opportunities in Eastern Ontario; e.g. data centres.</p>
Municipal Services	<p>Develop voluntary shared IT services and joint procurement programs. Promote regional training opportunities.</p> <p>Co-ordinate and develop a Municipal Information Management Project (MIMP).</p>	<p>Assess municipal broadband needs.</p> <p>Engage municipal planning departments to support broadband infrastructure in new developments.</p> <p>Identify opportunities to improve emergency response communications in conjunction with available spectrum options, such as the 700 MHz band.</p>	<p>Support and develop expanded online services for ratepayers.</p> <p>Explore improved local government apps.</p> <p>Explore opportunities to support home healthcare/paramedical monitoring.</p> <p>Identify and develop online applications that support citizen engagement with local government.</p>
Broadband Education	<p>Promote the adoption and use of Magnet, a job matching platform, with post-secondary schools and business organizations.</p> <p>Work with tourism organizations to develop an Eastern Ontario Tourism e-kit.</p>	<p>Promote improved broadband access in the 62 business parks/ areas wired through EORN.</p> <p>Support promotional programs to encourage broadband.</p> <p>Provide input and advice to the CRTC on rural broadband requirements.</p>	<p>Support technology demonstration projects and kiosks where citizens can access internet services.</p> <p>Facilitate access to online training, webinars and public meetings to promote new technologies for citizens, businesses and government.</p>
Broadband Infrastructure (Fixed & Mobile)	<p>Work with partners to understand regional user uptake and how to support fixed and mobile broadband needs.</p> <p>Investigate uptake patterns for fixed and mobile broadband in urban and rural areas.</p>	<p>Look to <i>Digital Canada 150</i> funding to serve areas in Eastern Ontario without terrestrial broadband.</p> <p>Conduct a gap analysis for mobile broadband and cell coverage throughout the region. Build case for mobile broadband expansion if required.</p> <p>Ensure ongoing upgrades to existing EORN infrastructure and maximize scalability of the network.</p>	<p>Develop a strategy to ensure broadband investments and transportation networks deliver seamless travel across the region – create a “smart” overlay.</p> <p>Research and identify future requirements for upload speeds for fixed and mobile broadband.</p>

Measurement and Evaluation

Evaluating the strategy over time will be key – particularly so that the organization can continue to make evidence-based decisions on future activities. The success of the organization has been due in part to its ability to be flexible and adapt to changing internal and external circumstances and opportunities. EORN will need to remain flexible in the future, as circumstances are likely to change over the long term.

To address this challenge, the organization will use an annual balanced scorecard to measure both the financial results as well as the perspectives of internal and external stakeholders. At the highest level, it is expected that the scorecard will include:

FINANCIAL RESULTS	STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVES	OPERATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS	CORPORATE MISSION
<p>Did the organization successfully operate within its budget?</p> <p>Was it able to leverage new investments from a variety of public and private sector sources into the identified focus areas?</p>	<p>Did the organization fulfil its objectives within the EOWC Economic Development Strategy?</p> <p>Did the organization promote and develop new partnerships?</p> <p>Was the organization responsive to requests and comments from citizens and stakeholders?</p> <p>Did the organization professionally and accurately communicate and represent the values/perspectives of the EOWC?</p>	<p>Were internal business practices completed efficiently and effectively?</p> <p>Were the terms and conditions of all third party funding and reporting requirements met?</p>	<p>Did the corporation contribute to the creation of wealth and employment opportunities in Eastern Ontario?</p> <p>Was high-speed broadband available to the citizens, businesses and public institutions of Eastern Ontario?</p>





“ The average contribution of the internet economy to Canada’s current GDP is a full 25 per cent below its G20 peers (CIRA 2013). ”

*Reasserting Canada’s Competitiveness
in the Digital Economy*, The Internet Association,
September 2014





For more information, contact:

Lisa Severson
Communications & Stakeholder
Relations Officer

Eastern Ontario Regional Network

Email: info@eorn.ca

www.eorn.ca