



EORN
EASTERN ONTARIO
REGIONAL NETWORK



Broadband Benefits: Addressing the Digital Divide

The Eastern Ontario Regional Network (EORN) was created because improved affordable, high-speed Internet access was seen as a critical tool for the region's long-term growth and success.

When the project started in 2010, some 300,000 people out of one million in the region had either no access or low-speed, dial-up access to the Internet. Local businesses surveyed also identified the lack of high-speed Internet infrastructure as a barrier to growth and prosperity.

Like the expansion of railroads and highways in the past, broadband infrastructure helps to connect communities and opens up new investment opportunities.

The economic impacts of high-speed Internet access are real and measurable:

- A July 2009 report from the World Bank estimated that every 10 per cent increase in broadband subscribers correlated to about 1.4 per cent in growth in Gross Domestic Product (GDP).
- The World Bank also says that broadband accounted for 10 to 14 per cent of job growth rates between 1998 and 2002.
- Businesses adopting broadband-based processes improved productivity from five to 10 per cent, according to a June 2011 report by the Broadband Commission for Digital Development.

Advanced applications of Internet technology will only increase the economic potential.

The opportunities to provide remote services and the growth in cloud computing means that broadband can open up businesses to international markets.

EORN's goal is to improve access to the Internet with higher speeds and bandwidth to at least 95 per cent of homes and businesses in Eastern Ontario, a majority of which will see speeds of up to 10 Mbps. Once completed, this improved access will deliver a number of social and economic benefits, such as:

- Improved innovation and economic development opportunities, like greater numbers of home-based businesses, ability of new and existing businesses to use e-marketing, and the use of remote technologies to expand business services;
- Improved delivery of government and public sector services, and improved public access to government services and information;
- Expanded use of e-Health technology, such as remote diagnostics, and reduced travel time and costs to access distant health services;
- Improved education and training opportunities through expanded access to e-Learning; and,
- Improved quality of life as residents use broadband technologies to keep in touch with friends and family and enjoy greater entertainment options through Internet television/movie services and gaming.