The ‘real’ impact of high-speed broadband on rural communities.......
“the internet has become a basic utility for homes and businesses in the same way as electricity or water”
Broadband availability (November 2012)

Ofcom (2012)
The Scottish Government (2007)

Scottish Executive - 6-Fold Urban Rural Classification

- Large urban areas (with a population of over 125,000)
- Other urban areas (with a population of 10,000 to 125,000)
- Accessible small towns (with a population of 3,000 to 10,000 and within a 30 minute drive time of a settlement with a population of 10,000)
- Remote small towns (with a population of 3,000 to 10,000 and over a 30 minute drive time of a settlement with a population of 10,000)
- Accessible rural (with a population less than 3,000 and within a 30 minute drive time of a settlement with a population of 10,000)
- Remote rural (with a population less than 3,000 and over a 30 minute drive time of a settlement with a population of 10,000)

Source:
Scottish Executive - Geographical Information Service June 2007
“The provision of appropriate infrastructure and public Internet access points (PIAPs) to rural regions is seen as an essential pre-condition to a ‘context-based approach’ at the regional or local level in order to foster economic growth, quality of life, social equity and environmental sustainability...”

Impact of high-speed broadband

• Availability and access to high quality education and training
• Improved business sustainability, growth and new ventures
• Enhanced health and social welfare
• Sustainability of long-established and significant communities
• Rise in economic growth
• Improved well-being

Bute - Key themes

• Working
• Education
• Living
• Communication
• Information Sourcing
• Shopping
• Leisure and Recreation
“The Inland Revenue and all that are pushing for you to do it online. A farmer had to dismiss his one worker because they were wanting him to fill out his PAYE online and he didn’t even have a computer”

“it’s vital to the running of the business...it’s become the way society has gone...you can’t go backwards – they won’t allow you to...”
I’ve done stuff in the past but one of the reasons that didn’t work was because of the poor internet connection...trying to get open links with the lecturer ....now going to do the ECDL”

“[Education City is] purely voluntary but encouraged-especially the early years .....reiterates what the teachers are doing”.
“It wasn’t one of our considerations...that’s how naive we were when we moved from the mainland...we just took it for granted that broadband would be readily available...for it not to have been was a huge shock to the system...and it was too late to do anything about it..... and we would have been in such deep trouble as I wanted to work from home...”
Communication

“Keep in contact with the folk more than you would than just texting.....keep in contact with people you wouldn’t normally keep in contact with.....keeping in touch with friends...faraway friends and family”

“I would be probably quite lost without it...it’s my main means of communication....”
Information sourcing

“[for the children] helping their education and ....widen their horizons...use it as a visual tool...projects and questions...my son wanted to make a submarine, we googled a picture and got the stuff and then he made his version of a submarine but he had that as a visual reference”

“because I missed Bolt’s run – one of them...I caught up with it on the BBC website”
“[use the internet for] birthday presents – getting decent presents here is very difficult”

“I’m not a shopper...it’s delivered to your door...try it on in your own house...controlled spending...not off the island very often – I just don’t have the time”
Leisure and recreation

“It’s opened my world up to music...I can do yoga online...on YouTube it’s all there”

“Less time working [with slow connectivity] and more time with the family”

“can compare sites [for holidays] to get the best deals...saves money and time”
Overall Impact of Broadband

Takes Less Time

It's a utility....

For business....
References


Highlands and Islands Enterprise (2009) “Young people in the Highlands and Islands: Understanding and influencing the migration choices of young people to and from the Highlands and Islands of Scotland” (Final report). Retrieved from: www.hie.co.uk/common/handlers/download-document.ashx?id...15dc... [5th September 2012]


