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# ICT Infrastructure as Public Infrastructure

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# ICT Infrastructure as Public Infrastructure

- What examples of public information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure exist in Canada today? How is “public” defined?
- What are the different models and best practices of public ICT infrastructure in terms of deployment, technology choice and innovation, investment, governance, adoption and use?
- What are the public benefits of community-based/public ICT infrastructure provision?
- What public policies and supports are necessary to promote and sustain public ICT infrastructure?



## Focus on *Public Broadband Networks*

- Should municipal broadband networks and community WiFi be considered as basic infrastructure for the 21st century?
  - Fred eZone (municipal wireless network, Fredericton)
  - Île sans Fil (community wireless network organization, Montreal)
  - K-Net (Keewaytinook Okimakanak tribal council community network, Northwestern Ontario)
  - Wireless Nomad (co-operative internet service provider, Toronto)
  - Toronto Hydro Telecom One Zone (city wide wireless network)
  - Industry Canada (government partner)

# Infrastructure Innovations?



- Technology is standardized:
  - WiFi, WiMax, mesh networks
- Key Factors in Adoption/Use?
  - Access to high speed backbone (backhaul)
  - Local context is key
  - Geography, access to support, QoS, business case

## Progress and activities to date

- Understanding the terrain of public broadband infrastructure in Canada: community and municipal providers, working with case study partners to learn what they are providing
- Articulating benefits of public broadband infrastructure, desiderata for public wireless infrastructure, review of literature and international experiences
- Investigating policy aspects of deploying public broadband infrastructure

## Longer term goals

- Documentation of successes and failures in Canadian public broadband deployments, documentation of best practices
- Theorizing about public aspects of infrastructure
- Understanding parallels between public broadband and earlier instances of public ICT infrastructures
- Developing policy recommendations for deployment of public wireless infrastructures