Sharing Canadian e-Government Experiences:
The Community Access Program (CAP)
Background

• Canada’s *Connecting Canadians* initiative was one of the first national strategies in the world designed to expand access to information and communications technologies.

• The initiative centred on a set of Industry Canada programs and initiatives, particularly:
  – SchoolNet
  – Computers for Schools
  – Francommunautés virtuelles
  – Broadband for Rural and Northern Development
  – Community Access Program
These core programs and initiatives represent Industry Canada’s response to:

• the economic transformation arising from the convergence of computers and communications technologies and the emergence of the Internet

• the growth and importance of new markets and work being shaped by information and communications technologies (ICTs) and the Internet

• the need to improve engagement of Canadians facing barriers to the Internet-enabled economy
Connecting Canadians Successes

We achieved connectedness goals for education, public access and research

• First country to connect schools & libraries to the Internet
• Over 650,000 refurbished computers supplied to schools & libraries
• CAP sites established in over 3,000 communities
• 30,000 grassroots collaborative classroom-based projects completed between 1996 and 2004
• 45% of participating First Nations Schools will be connected to high speed Internet by March 31, 2005
• More than 140 Francommunautés virtuelles projects completed since 1998
• Broadband has funded 58 projects encompassing 884 communities (including 116 First Nations communities)
Community Access Program (CAP)

- A federal government program to provide Canadians with affordable public access to the Internet and the skills to use it
- Pilots in 1994, officially launched in 1995
- Currently 3,930 CAP sites provide Internet access in libraries, community and educational centres, Aboriginal organizations and other public access sites
- Sites are required to provide staff to assist people in using computers and the Internet
- Access is usually free, but there may be a nominal charge per hour or for each service (e.g., fee for printing or scanning a page)
- Characteristics of each site vary widely (number of computers, focus for clientele, etc.)
Policy Context in 1995

- Many rural and remote communities:
  - faced chronic high unemployment
  - lacked the potential to create businesses and jobs in the innovative and growth sectors of the economy

- Many rural Canadians:
  - were not aware of the Internet and its potential benefits
  - could not afford computers or Internet connectivity charges
  - did not have the skills required to use information technologies
  - were reluctant to use new technologies out of fear
Government’s Vision at the Time

- Information Highway: an important tool for community economic development

- CAP aimed to:
  - help bring the Information Highway to all Canadians
  - equalize access between advantaged and disadvantaged areas and groups
  - foster business and job creation
  - help develop a strong computer literate population
  - stimulate the conversion of public services to electronic delivery
  - ensure citizens had skills to use on-line services and information
CAP History

- Steady growth in goals and expectations and a refocus to reflect progress in Internet usage
  - 1994: pilots
  - 1995: establish 1,000 CAP sites in rural areas
  - 1996: establish 1,500 CAP sites in rural areas
  - 1997: establish 5,000 CAP sites in rural areas
  - 1998: establish additional 5,000 CAP sites in urban areas
  - 2004: rationalization of network to serve digital divide communities – seniors, low income, low education, Aboriginals, francophones, rural residents with low Internet usage
Delivered through Partnerships

• Sites originally chosen through a competitive process – community-based organizations submitted proposals for funding
• National Advisory Committee and Provincial/Territorial Review Committees
• Formal agreements with other levels of government, school boards, libraries
• After initial period of focus on growth in number of sites, for last several years, CAP focused on sustaining existing sites
Depends on Community Support

- Sites originally required to match federal support by in-kind or cash contributions
- Currently, average site operating cost: $20,000
- National average CAP funding per site: $4,200
- Up to 80% of funding from other sources, including provincial and municipal governments, libraries, other government departments, etc. as cash, equipment or in-kind services
- 2005 KPMG study by KPMG
  - federal investment of $308 M and third-party contributions of $725 M
  - leverage ratio of 2.82 (funding to sites only)
  - leverage due to large, diversified base of partners and supporters
Location of CAP Sites

- 68% of CAP Sites are located in Rural, Northern, and Remote communities and on First Nations Reserves
- 32% of CAP Sites are located in Urban communities
- 36% of CAP Sites are located in Libraries (includes 5% in School Libraries)
- 26% are located in Community/Recreational/Cultural Centres
Demand for On-Site Assistance

- Training-Use of the internet
- Training-Use of computer applications
- Training-Searching for jobs
- Online Federal Gov't Services
- Online Provincial/Territorial Gov't Services
- Online Municipal or Regional Gov't Services
- Other Training
- Other Services
- Developing Web sites
- Developing Web site content
- Training-Developing Web sites & content
- Training-Creating/Managing a business

% of Respondents

High □ Medium □

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Top 10 Services Most Often Requested

- Internet access: 1,527
- Access to e-mail: 1,457
- Training/Assistance: 1,061
- Job Searching/Career: 884
- Software/Application: 835
- e-Government: 559
- Resume Preparation: 470
- Admin Support/Services: 435
- Education/Academic assistance: 433
- Research/Accessing services/information: 398

(n=2,574)
Target Groups/Clients Served

• More than 50% of CAP Sites identified the following as target groups:
  – Youth  - 85%
  – Seniors  - 75%
  – Job Seekers  - 70%,
  – People with low income - 69%,
  – People with limited education  - 57%
### CAP Successes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Daily</th>
<th>Per Year</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Number of Clients Served (in 2004/05)</td>
<td>101,000</td>
<td>15,075,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Number of Repeat Users</td>
<td>56,000</td>
<td>8,346,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Number of Volunteers (for 2004/05)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>2,400</td>
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<tr>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>17,100</td>
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</table>
More CAP Successes

- 2005 BearingPoint cost-benefit analyses estimated CAP created 17,928 jobs from 1994 to 2004
  - 14,520 in direct employment
  - 3,408 in indirect employment
- Unquantifiable benefits
  - increased social capital
  - improved productivity from ICTs
  - local business development – training of entrepreneurs, business web sites stimulated sales
CAP Success Factors

Multiple Partners, Leveraging and Community Engagement

• Community-based grassroots ownership – federal government a catalyst, facilitator

• Locally-identified assets, needs and solutions

• Strong partnerships with other federal departments, different levels of government, community

• Sites that are integrated into the social and economic life of the community
Multiple Partners, Leveraging and Community Engagement

- Services respond to needs of the community
- Ability to leverage funding
- Strong volunteer component
- Committed partners who share the management of the project
- Relevant local information at the sites
- User & equipment support
Key Elements affecting success and sustainability

- Sites that reflect the continuing social and economic needs of the community
- Committed partners who share the management of the project
- A shared vision
- Relevant local information and participation
- User & equipment support
- Sites recognized as an essential service
Many Canadians Still Face Barriers to ICT Infrastructure

- 28% of Canadians still do not use computers due to lack of computer access.
- almost 50% of non-Internet users are unaware of its benefits; more than one-third of whom say that they would be likely to use the Internet if someone showed them how.
- only 27% of households earning less than $23,000/year use the Internet, compared to 82% of households earning more than $70,000/year.
- 26% of households with less than high school education use the Internet as compared with 82% of those with university degrees.
- an estimated 80% of 3.6 million (12.4 %) Canadians with disabilities have never used a computer.
- barriers include distance, geography, affordability, digital literacy, disabilities and awareness.
Role in e-Government

• Currently examining how CAP can best support the government’s objective to provide better, one-stop service to more Canadians in more communities

• Wherever there is public access, people are using it to take advantage of on-line services

• Have to work within mandate of host organizations of the CAP sites (e.g., community organizations, libraries, schools, Aboriginal organizations)

• Provides tremendous potential to leverage wide public on-line access