

Speednetworking Session Results

Question 1: Do communities perceive broadband as directly connected to a community's economic vitality or development?

The variety of answers to this question demonstrated the disparate views on how broadband supports life. Those reporting from rural communities had many reasons why the populace might not care about broadband. Generally, the respondents did not feel that citizens had made the connection between broadband and economic development. More education on the value of improved broadband services was suggested as a means to overcome the predominant view that Internet connectivity is a personal convenience, whether through dial-up, DSL or wireless services.

Factors cited that could help to improve broadband adoption included:

- Leadership
- Locale-city vs. rural
- Educational attainment of populace
- Cost
- Availability
- Changing Needs of citizens
- Youth
- Economic status of community
- Other Community Resources
- Digierati – people who are informed
- Economically challenged neighborhoods
- Income of residents

While many responses were unique, below:

Yes	No	Depends	Reasons
X			Maintain competitive business position
x			New cornerstone of democracy
x			Not expressed this way, but people want it
X			Necessary in tourist/weekender communities
X			Employer Interest in area
X			Population Growth
X			Area Businesses Value
X			Attraction for Business Development
X			Educational Attainment
X			Maintaining Youth in area
X			Overcomes Rural isolation
X			Overcomes Rural isolation
	x		Not seen as essential
	x		Indigenous families -no need
	x		No one cares as long as its available
	x		Connection with economics not made apparent
	x		People connect economic development to jobs not access
	x		Education needed about potential
	x		People do not see connection between BB and Internet opportunity
	x		Patrons expect free access
	x		Patrons see social network value

- x Economic downturn changing use patterns
- x Distance ed changing need
- x Use of BB better than dial up service
- x Personal convenience
- x Seniors not making connection
- x Summer population not concerned

Question 2: How can a Library promote the library's position as a hub for broadband access?

The large number of responses to this question concentrated on communication as the primary means to improve the library's central position for access in a community. Respondents felt that helping a community recognize broadband as a new utility would enhance adoption and help the library to gain recognition as a provider. Many respondents felt that new legislation to allow entities with better Broadband lines to share their broadband access with public libraries was very important to growth in BB for libraries. Better community understanding of all the services libraries provide would also help establish centrality as a hub. Many of the strategies and services cited by respondents are noted below.

The major areas cited in responses fell into the following categories.

Communication	Word of Mouth Messages to →	Schools	Community Groups	Churches	Town Hall Meetings
Publications →	Friends of Library	Posters	Flyers	Press releases	Articles/Columns
Displays	Newsletters	In and outside Library	Area Billboards	Shopping Areas	Apartment Complexes
Promotional Activities	Signage	Picnics	Festivals	Fundraisers	Advertising
Speaking Engagements	Magnets	Chambers	Realtors	Senior Groups	Clubs
Internet Postings	Schools	Library Promotion thru Website	YouTube		
Local Media	Town Web site	Commercial & Public TV	Newspapers	PSAs	
Visits by public & library director / staff	Radio	External by Libraries			
		Posters			
Marketing→	Branding	In and outside Library	Programs/Programming	Book Sales	
	Build New Message of BB as a Utility Library Cards	Build message of Economic Vitality from Broadband			

Legislation →	Advocate Change in Law for Shared IT Access	Increasing Use of Library To leverage budget increase			
Classes→	Trustees	Leaders	Other Groups		
Community Centers	Hub for Community access	Computer Training classes	wifi café	Teen program surge	Meeting Spaces
Partnerships→	all age groups - students-seniors	public safety officers	Town Leadership	Social services/Seniors	Colleges/BOCES
Business Advantage	Cost effectiveness	24 x 7 resources	Growth in Use	Data tracking	Benefits for Businesses /Classes Distance Learning Site
Services	Downloads	Gadget Garage	Web Hosting Facebook Presence	"Genius" (Reference)	
Resources	Trained staff and expertise	Electronic and onsite resources Webinars/conferencing	Youth Internet Literacy Facebook Presence	Programming using Broadband	

Question 3: What are the constraints/opportunities regarding broadband within your community?

Summary:

There were around 80 responses to this question. Discussion of constraints far outweighed opportunities. ALL responses included money issues as the major constraint: libraries do not have adequate budgets for current Bband costs – whether it be “last mile” or monthly fees. A major theme was unaffordable/unreasonable cost of service; lack of availability/lack of choices-boils down to providers needing a financial incentive to provide affordable fiber to libraries and needing to realize that library availability will increase not decrease public demand. Most mentioned that there doesn’t seem to be enough population for phone Company/cable Company to make investment of lines/service. Interestingly, another major theme was that there is a lack of public awareness of what Bband can do. Participants made very few notes regarding opportunities. When they did, there was no clear pattern. However, the opportunity to educate the public regarding Broadband was the most frequently mentioned item. Noteworthy were the mentions of E-rate as an opportunity if E-Rate applications were easier to complete and more financially rewarding and if there were a way to structure Internet access to minimize CIPA problems.

Constraints (In rank order)	Opportunities (In rank order)
Funding- Money for installation & monthly costs	Educate public regarding Bband needs/capabilities
Area poverty	No other public source of Bband except library
Not enough population for phone company/cable company to make investment of lines/service. Fiber not available. Lines/service old, unreliable.	Youth embrace Bband and can put pressure on decision makers
Lack of public awareness of what Bband can do	Stimulus Funds- some need to go directly to libraries
Lack of quality/reliable service provider- “free” account is totally inadequate	E-government necessitates Bband
Library location/facility/ hours	Video conferencing
Library hardware, wiring, infrastructure needs to be changed	E-rate
No ability to connect with schools and their existing backbone	

What are some possible partnerships for developing solutions to broadband issues? What factors affect the potential success of these partnerships? (Question 4)

The idea of partnerships appeared to be difficult. There were a lot more empty envelopes. However, the ideas for partnership ALL mentioned government involvement in some way, with mention of schools nearly as consistent. A good number of suggestions involved educating providers to realize benefits of partnering with libraries. The success factors showed a lot less consistency in answers. However, nearly all made mention of funding/community support and common vision/lack of turf wars between partners.

Partnerships- Library with... (In Rank Order)	Success Factors- (In Rank Order)
Local Government/County government/state government	Funding/community awareness
Public Schools	Size of community & geography of area, size of library
Service providers- cable, DSL etc.	All partners have similar vision- no turf wars
Community colleges/other colleges	Technical knowledge/knowledge of importance of Bband
Library Systems	Political support-legislation needs to support partnerships & remove restrictions
Legislators	Mutually beneficial
Local business/Chamber of commerce	Strong advocacy for the library within the community- good communication
Not-for-profits	Availability- can't partner if there are no services available Funding
Tech community	Accurate usage statistics & other data

What is necessary for an appropriate level of broadband services to be financially sustained? (Question 5)

Most participants did respond to this question and approached the question from two perspectives: what libraries need to have done for them and what libraries need to do. The underlying assumption appeared to be that it was technically possible to have this service since absolutely no one mentioned first physically receiving the service. However, **all** mentioned the need for government help: to get infrastructure installed and as a permanent source of \$\$, either in the form of subsidies, taxes or legislation outlining no Bband cost for non-profits. Some thought this was a Federal government responsibility, some saw it a State government issue. Interestingly, all identified the need for some local governmental support. From this it was logical that the other consistent thread was the importance of the community: community involvement in articulating the necessity of adequate Bband was raised again and again. The idea of Broadband as a shared community utility such as electricity was prevalent with mention of the REA quite frequent. Libraries saw themselves needing to: utilize e-rate IF the forms were easier and CIPA restrictions lifted; have access to training, technical support and money for hardware; and have help in planning for and marketing upgraded Bband.

Sustainability Factors
Money-local funds not sufficient
Community support-
Government help to get infrastructure
Define Bband as a core function/utility
Provider Cooperation- Low cost/no cost
Tax Credit/Government assistance
Easier E-Rate program-no CIPA restriction or a way around it
Hardware & Technical support- Bband w/out computers useless
Best practices data to help libraries make their case
Planning & marketing