Accessibility and use of broadband in rural Ireland

ICT in Rural Areas
John Hannafin
Tipperary Institute
Rural Ireland at a glance...
Ireland has a high proportion of people living in rural areas (39 percent in 2005 compared to the OECD average of 24 percent).
Ireland also has a low population density relative to other OECD countries; population density in Ireland is 62 inhabitants per square kilometer.
The rural population in Ireland can now be considered to be predominantly non-farming.
State of play of broadband in Ireland

Availability & Use

Accessibility and use of broadband in rural Ireland
As of Q3 2009, broadband connections account for 90 percent of internet connections
State of play of broadband...
30 percent of broadband connections in Q3 2009 were mobile
State of play of broadband...
As of Q3 2010, Ireland has 22.6 broadband subscribers per 100 inhabitants compared to the OECD average of 24.4 (excluding mobile broadband as defined by the OECD for international comparisons).
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OECD Fixed (incl. fixed wireless and satellite) broadband subscriptions per 100 inhabitants, by technology, June 2010

Source: OECD
What about rural broadband?
Rural Broadband Scheme completed in 2010 and has met the EU target for broadband availability.
The Scheme has brought a broadband service to 1,028 areas where previously coverage was deemed to be insufficient.
The Rural Broadband Reach Scheme was announced March 2010 and is delivered under the RDP.

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The Rural Broadband Reach Scheme

“Aims to secure access to broadband for certain target premises in rural Ireland to which affordable broadband is not currently available and is unlikely to be available in the near future.”
ICT Usage & Needs

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The ten most popular activities (2005) that the general population used the Internet for are:

1. Sending & receiving emails.
2. Finding information about goods & services.
3. Travel & accommodation services.
4. Internet banking.
5. Looking for information about training, education and course offers.
6. Obtaining information from public authority websites.
7. Consulting the internet with the purpose of learning.
10. Submitting completed Official Forms.
What about Farming Ireland?
In May 2007 the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food appointed a Committee on the Uptake of IT in Agriculture and Rural Communities (CUITA).
The committee was set up with a view to getting guidance and advice on the relevant areas surrounding ICT usage in farming and rural families in Ireland.
Some CUITA findings...
Some CUITA findings ...

- Popular internet farmer activities (2010)
  1. To find information about goods and services
  2. Sending and receiving emails
  3. For agricultural services
  4. To download forms
  5. Internet banking
  6. Purchase goods online
Some CUITA findings ...

Approximately 96% of farmers have access to a PC and 83% own a PC.
Some CUITA findings ...

44% of farmers who use a PC use it for home/farm accounts or for running farm management software.
Approximately 33% of Single Payment Scheme claims were received online in 2010 (12% submitted by individual farmers, 88% submitted by an authorised agent)
Some CUITA findings ...

![Graph showing Single Payment Scheme Applications]

- **No. of applications**
  - Y-axis ranges from 0 to 140,000
  - Key data points:
    - 2007: 4,887
    - 2008: 4,363
    - 2009: 5,161
    - 2010: 5,024

- **Year**
  - Years range from 2007 to 2010

- **Application Methods**
  - **Paper**
  - **Online Agent**
  - **Online Farmer**
There is a continuing need to address the barriers to technology adoption faced by farmers.
Barriers to technology adoption (farmers) ...

Age
Barriers to technology adoption (farmers) ...

Broadband availability & cost
Barriers to technology adoption (farmers)...

Education and knowledge
Fear of technology

Accessibility and use of broadband in rural Ireland
Key influencers on farmers decision to adopt ICT

(source CUITA study)
Key influencers on farmers decision to adopt ICT

Educational Level is the main factor which has shown to have an impact.
Facilitating Conditions - the degree to which farmers believe that they have the knowledge and resources necessary to use the farming software and websites.
Key influencers on farmers decision to adopt ICT

Perceived usefulness of technology (Performance Expectancy).
Influence of Family (neighbouring colleagues are found not to be influencers).
Needs of local community groups
(from personal experience)
Need for integration between discrete IT systems

Integration between various Community Scheme systems, MA reporting systems and systems used by the community groups themselves
Needs of local community groups ...

Need for higher end database systems. Systems that can better manage the data community groups generate and work with.
Needs of local community groups ...
Needs of local community groups...

Need for improved communication systems
(social media beginning to be used)
Needs of local community groups ...

...and lots more

Accessibility and use of broadband in rural Ireland
How are needs identified and reported?
Identifying & reporting needs ...

At a National level by various government Departments
Identifying & reporting needs ...

At a regional level by regional authorities, agencies & development companies
Identifying & reporting needs ...

Through surveys
Identifying & reporting needs ...

Through focus groups
Identifying & reporting needs ...

...and other research methodologies
Some closing thoughts
Thanks you