



Mind the (Broadband) Gap!

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- European Regional Information Society Association
- IANIS+ Innovative Actions Network for the Information Society (2005-2007), co-funded by DG REGIO and 39 EU Regions
- Broadband Stakeholder Group, a PPP between the UK Government and the broadband value chain

The Broadband Paradox

- Those that need Broadband most to compensate for lack of local services (public and private) are least likely to have access to affordable high bandwidth services, thus excluding them from the potential benefits of the Information Society
- New investment in Next Generation Networks will expand the broadband gap between the “haves” and the “have nots”

The Gap

- Exists in all EU Member States, even the paragons which lead the “eReadiness” league tables do not yet provide ubiquitous, affordable high bandwidth services
- Most evident in rural, sparsely populated areas but also even in relatively affluent areas

HOW WIDE IS THE GAP?

- Depends on what you want to do!
- Simple email does not need broadband
- MP3 streaming only needs 512Kbits
- But access to online eGovernment services probably only works with a minimum of 1 Mbit (and a lot of time on your hands)
- Access to online medical diagnostics starts to get real with 2 Mbits

WHO IS “MINDING THE GAP”?

- NOT the mainstream Telcos because the standard business case does not stack up
- NOT the solutions designers who don't have to worry about available bandwidth
- NOT the media companies which are focussing on premium priced digital content, rather than delivery to the total market

PUBLIC SECTOR AUTHORITIES HAVE TO MIND THE GAP.

- EU –by following up the rhetoric of “Bridging the Broadband Gap” conference (Brussels, May 2007) with coherent actions
- Member States – by accelerating modernisation and empowering local public authorities
- Regional and Municipal authorities –by refocussing their priorities
- NGOs and Communities –by embracing ICT as an enabling technology

WHY SHOULD THE PUBLIC SECTOR PAY?

- To influence/counterbalance “the market”
- To create a culture of innovation
- To ensure equality of treatment for all
- To enhance local competitiveness
- To promote local academic excellence
- To promote local cultural development
- To invest for the future!



THANK YOU!

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