

Digital Technology Adoption in Northern and Remote Indigenous Communities in Canada

Appendix 4: Online Focus Group in Timiskaming First Nation, Quebec

Prepared for Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED)



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First Mile Connectivity Consortium (FMCC)



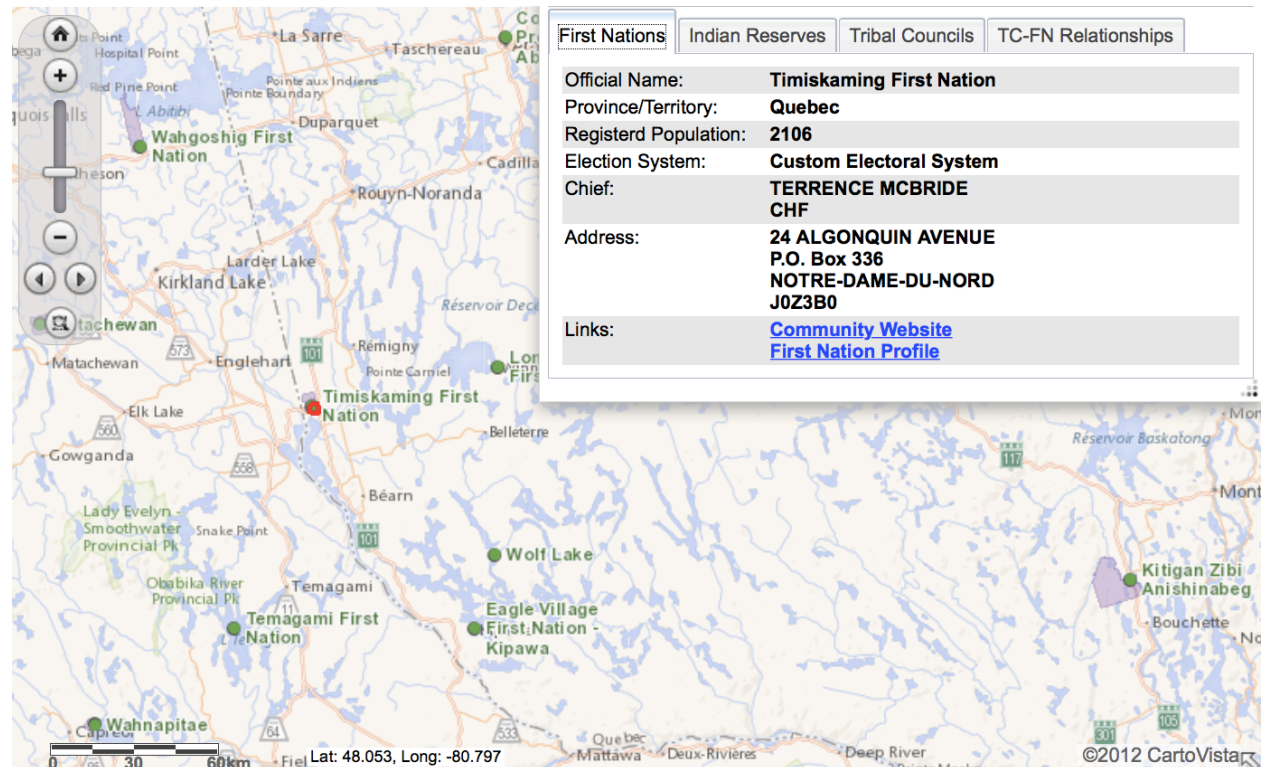
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Online Focus Group in Timiskaming First Nation, Quebec

1. Background Information about The Community:

Timiskaming First Nation (TFN) is an Algonquin community on the Quebec side of the border between Quebec and Ontario, about 510 km northwest of Ottawa. The community is adjacent to the municipality of Notre-Dame-du-Nord, (Quebec) and it is accessible by Highway 101.



From INAC's First Nation Profiles Interactive Map at <http://fnpim-cippn.aandc-aadnc.gc.ca/index-eng.html>

TFN has fibre optic infrastructure in place but is facing challenges around the high costs for connectivity services for both households and community services; local human capacity to develop and manage their local systems; and limited bandwidth. The First Nations Education Council (FNEC) works with the community to provide connectivity support and expand fibre optic links to local organizations and residents.

The FMCC-ISED project researchers have an established research relationship with TFN that began in 2014-2015 with a project undertaken in partnership with FNEC and the University of New Brunswick. This existing relationship with the TFN community was critical in facilitating the focus group described in this report. As a community informatics research initiative, the previous research project explored digital literacies through household surveys managed by community-based researchers. All aspects of the project were collaboratively designed and implemented by TFN's Education Department (Arline Chasle, Education Director), FNEC (Tim Whiteduck), and the

University of New Brunswick (Rob McMahon). Data collection and analysis was conducted by community members, including high school students and Band council staff.

This work resulted in a presentation at the 2015 annual conference of the Canadian Sociological Association in Ottawa, a keynote lecture presented at the March 2015 Digital Futures conference in Edmonton, an article published in the *Journal of Community Informatics* that describes the project methodology (McMahon, Chasle & Whiteduck, 2015),¹ and an article currently under review by the *Engaged Scholar Journal* that further explores the project methodology in Timiskaming as well as a follow-up initiative with the Algonquin community of Long Point (McMahon, Whiteduck, Chasle, Chief, Polson & Rodgers, under review).

The following community information about TFN is obtained from the INAC First Nations profile online site located at http://fnp-ppn.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/fnp/Main/Search/FNMain.aspx?BAND_NUMBER=64&lang=eng

Population: As of January 2016, the population on the reserve was 584. Approximately 1500 additional band members live off the reserve.

Distance to major services: The reserve is linked to other locations in Ontario and Quebec by paved road.

Nearest town: New Liskeard, Ontario, 29 km away (now officially part of the town of Temiskaming Shores).

Nearest airport: Earlton, Ontario, 35 km away.

Nearest town with provincial government services: Rouyn, Quebec, about 108 km distant (Rouyn/Noranda also has a regional airport).

Health services: There is a health centre in the community. The nearest hospitals are 33 km away in Ontario and 32 km away in Quebec.

Education: Grades junior kindergarten to grade 8 are offered at school in the community. Francophone instruction is offered at an elementary school in Notre-Dame-du-Nord, Quebec, near the reserve. For high school, students go to New Liskeard for instruction in English or to Notre-Dame-du-Nord for instruction in French.

ESDC (Employment and Social Development Canada, formerly HRSD – Human Resources and Skills Development Canada) has a centre in the community.

Income and Employment: Average total earnings in 2011 were \$22,644, compared to Quebec average total earnings \$36,352. Major sources of employment are government and public services including health and education, other services, and trades. The unemployment rate in

¹ To read this article, titled “First Mile Methodologies in Community Informatics Research: Learning from First Nations”, please visit: <http://ci-journal.net/index.php/ciej/article/view/1185/1164>

2011 was 31.1 percent. Forty-three percent of the adult population had not completed high school in 2011.

2. Background Information about TFN's Communications Facilities and Services

The main provider of residential communications services is Télébec (a Bell Canada subsidiary): landline, mobile, cable TV, and Internet via ADSL. Fixed Internet broadband is also available from Parolink based in New Liskeard, Ontario via a microwave tower connection.

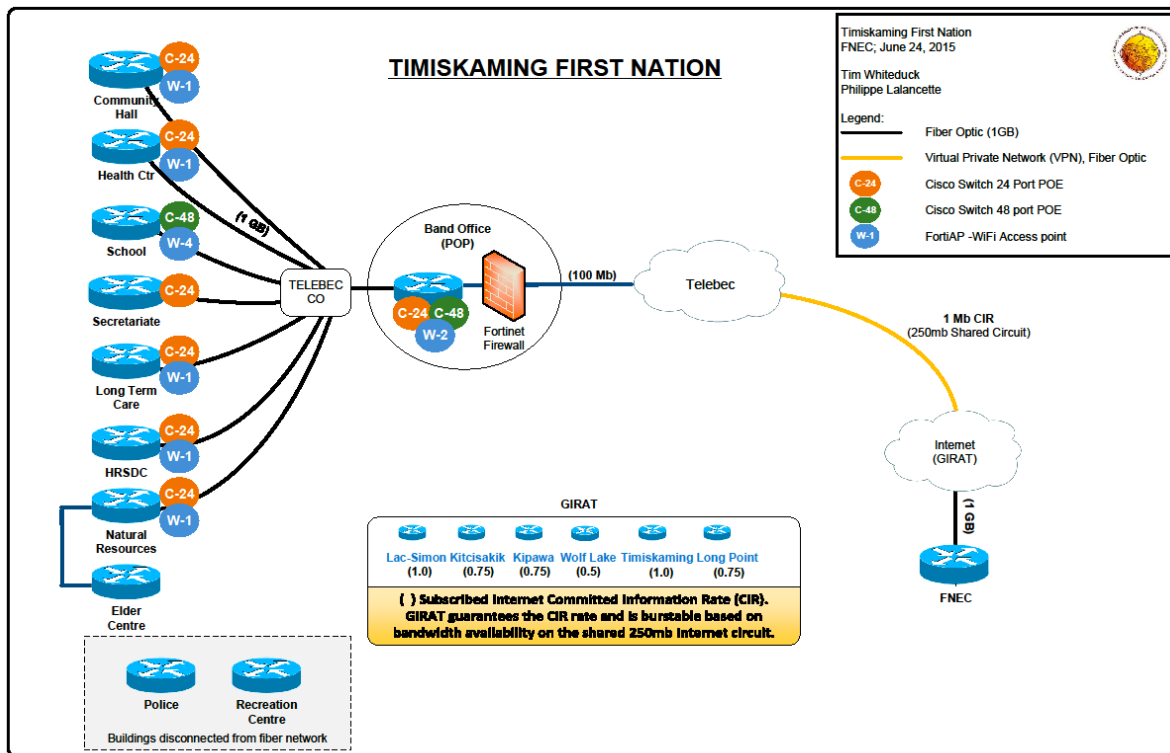
Along with six other Algonquin Nations in the region, community and public service institutions in Timiskaming are connected to a regional fibre network that is owned and operated by Télébec that was installed in 2000. This infrastructure connects public service organizations in the communities through a 20-year contract arrangement with Télébec (Timiskaming is currently in the 11th or 12th year of this contract). In 2015, FNEC hired a lawyer to look at the possibility of cancelling this contract without incurring any penalties, but there is no clause or condition that enables this to occur.

FNEC currently manages payment for this fibre network arrangement on behalf of Timiskaming. For fibre optic infrastructure, Télébec charges approximately \$15,000 for each initial installation, plus a recurring fee of \$100 per month per building. At present, 8 buildings are connected to this system. Summary of costs for the existing Télébec network in TFN:

- \$120,000: One-time capital cost for Fibre Optic installation to 8 buildings
- \$9,600: Annual operations and maintenance fees for 8 buildings

In addition to these costs, public and community services share the cost of \$313 / month for Internet Service provided by GIRAT. Since December 2007, the non-profit corporation, Gestion de l'inforoute régionale de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue (GIRAT) has been overseeing the management of the regional network built with local and regional governmental funds and those of the telecommunication partner (Télébec). The First Nations all subscribe to GIRAT for Internet service. www.girat.org. This service comes with a CIR rate of 1.0mb (it is a burstable service with a minimum guarantee of 1.0mb capacity) at a cost of \$3,756 annually for Internet Services from GIRAT (\$313 / month X 12 months).

Network diagram of current broadband network in Timiskaming



Timiskaming requires more bandwidth to access applications and services, but the cost to expand this capacity via Télébec’s existing network is around \$15,000 per building. The community is presently looking into installing broadband in 4 additional community service buildings at an estimated cost of \$60,000.²

As an alternative solution, in October 2014, FNEC completed an engineering assessment to install a community-owned fibre optic network to connect all 11 local public and community service buildings in the community.³ The estimated cost to connect these buildings is \$77,342.40. This estimate⁴ includes both capital and operations and maintenance costs, as well as a contingency fund:

- \$64,452: Capital costs to install fibre optic infrastructure in 11 buildings
- \$2,316: Annual operations and maintenance fees for all buildings
- \$12,890: Recommended contingency fund of 20%

² These buildings are: Chief and Council office; Pump station; Recreation centre/ Radio Station; and Police Station.

³ These buildings include the following: Health Centre; Learning Centre; Band Office; Anishinabeg Long Term Care Centre; Algonquin Nation Programs and Services- Social services; Kiwetin School; Human Resources and Development – Tribal Office; Community Hall; Police Station; Recreation Centre; and Council Office.

⁴ This should cover the cost of product indexation since 2014. If the construction takes multiple years, an additional cost of \$6,000 / year will be charged by the contractor.

3. Research Methodology:

In Timiskaming, we chose to pilot a focus group using videoconferencing technology to ascertain whether this technique could be used in other northern Indigenous communities. As noted above, a key success factor in this methodology was our team's pre-existing relationship with Timiskaming. A community-based research coordinator is required to support the kind of remotely-managed data collection process we describe here.

Videoconferencing facilities have been installed in Timiskaming and several other Indigenous communities in Quebec by the First Nations Education Council (FNEC). KNET has also installed facilities in Indigenous communities in northern Ontario, and videoconferencing is available in some other northern communities. Online videoconferencing using services such as Skype, Facebook or other online video applications are being used where the bandwidth is available.

Ten residents of Timiskaming participated in the focus group at the band office held on Feb. 12, 2016. The community-based research coordinators used BlueJeans videoconferencing software and equipment in the band office. The remotely-located interviewers also used Bluejeans software downloaded on laptop computers (through an easy-to-install and use web browser plug-in). The Bluejeans system was provided and managed by FNEC, with technical support from their staff in Wendake, Quebec. FNEC provided the link to the Bluejeans online meeting site, conducted tests with the researchers and Timiskaming to ensure video and audio links, recorded the session, and monitored and remained on-call during the session to ensure that any technical issues could be quickly addressed. The researchers and FNEC concurred on the use of Bluejeans rather than other platforms (such as Polycom CMA) because of its ease of use and demonstrated reliability for these types of events.

The interview protocol was discussed at the start of the focus group session. The primary goal of this study was on individual and household use of digital technologies with several references to the importance of organizational and institutional uses.

4. Community Engagement and Support:

The Timiskaming focus group was supported by an on-site community research coordinator, an essential component of this remotely-managed research methodology. The FMCC-ISED research team drew on existing relationships with the Timiskaming community to facilitate the work of the local coordinator. The existing research relationship with the community was a significant factor in facilitating this process. Pre-focus group planning was undertaken in collaboration with Timiskaming First Nation Band administration (TFN), and specifically with Arline. Arline helped with conceptualizing the process, identifying and managing an on-site coordinator, reviewing focus group questions and community information we collected from online sources (such as the AANDC First Nations Community Profiles), and public outreach for the project. We were informed the people in Timiskaming may be experiencing 'survey fatigue' because of the

multiple research activities that involve their community members. But the information being gathered was of interest to the community leadership to move forward with this focus group.

Understanding the complexities involved to coordinate a research focus group from outside an Indigenous community is demonstrated by the experience from this pilot research project. The local focus group was coordinated on-site by Audra Chief, who manages technical support for TFN. Audra was delegated to this task by Arline, who was unable to attend the focus group session. We should note that Arline and others at the TFN Band Office were extremely busy during this period since the community school was being evaluated and year end financial responsibilities were a priority. Given their limited staffing resources and competing priorities, this project put additional strain on the people working in TFN Band administration. The researchers worked with Arline, Audra and Tim Whiteduck (Technology Director for the First Nations Education Council) to put together a plan to promote, manage and conduct the focus groups remotely.

Initial planning activities included:

- an initial notice in *Kiwetin*, the Band education newsletter (mailed to all households in Timiskaming – **see NOTE 1**);
- in-person and phone recruitment carried out by Arline and Audra;
- managing a sign-up sheet at the Band office (**see NOTE 2**).
- Due to low levels of initial interest (only 1 or 2 people signed up) Audra and Arline followed up after the newsletter with on-site recruitment (**see NOTE 3** for information to help guide selection of participants).
- We also increased the honoraria provided to participants from \$20 to \$40, and provided participants with cash rather than a gift card.

To support Audra's day-of the focus group activities, we prepared a set of instructions and reviewed them with her by email and phone prior to the session (see **NOTE 4**). These included how to connect to the researchers through the Band office videoconference system, check people off the participant list, distribute research consent forms and collect signed copies after they were reviewed by the researchers, manage the focus group questions as an on-site coordinator, distribute honoraria to participants, and mail the signed consent forms to the researchers (see **NOTE 5** for the research consent form).

The researchers discussed this process with FNEC staff, who agreed to provide technical support for the focus group. The video and audio were adequate for the videoconference. The software was configured so that the person speaking was shown to the other sites.

5. General Comments on the Focus Group Facilitation

- The focus group was conducted by Heather Hudson and Rob McMahon on February 12, 2016 from 11 am to 12:30 pm ET.

- It was invaluable to have the on-site community research coordinator (Audra Chief) in the room. Audra handed out and collected the signed research consent forms from participants. FMCC-ISED researcher Rob McMahon went through the consent process from his remote location in Edmonton, Alberta. Audra's presence was also helpful in ensuring that the technical connection worked in TFN for the duration of the focus groups. She also participated in the focus group, handed out honoraria to the other participants, and mailed hard copies of the signed consent forms to the FMCC-ISED researchers following the conclusion of the focus group.
- The video and audio were adequate for the videoconference. The technology worked well, and participants seemed quite positive about using it.
- It was difficult to assure that everyone in the group took part. The software was configured so that the person speaking was shown to the other sites. Without seeing everyone in the group all the time, it was hard to draw out the more reticent members.
- It was useful to have two people doing interviews to spell each other off for note-taking, and to help with probes or follow-up on questions.
- The focus group was generally quite tech savvy. It was not a representative sample of the community in terms of variations in income levels and use of ICTs, but several participants could comment on usage and perceptions among others in the community.

6. Summary of Key Findings from the Focus Group Session

- Generally, Timiskaming residents use the Internet for a variety of applications, ranging from staying in touch with family and friends, to entertainment, information-seeking, and online shopping and bill-paying. Tablets and smartphones are popular means of accessing the Internet.
- Most go online at home; some also go online at work. Community access is available at the library, band office, and community hall. Wi-Fi is accessible outside some buildings.
- A youth in the community has developed an Algonquin language app that is used in the school and can be downloaded by anyone.
- There are not any facilities for training in digital technologies or tech support in the community. People learn from each other, and a person in the band office provides technical help. A community learning centre (former CAP site) has been shut down.
- Affordability of connectivity appears to be the main barrier to adoption. Prices are high for those on fixed income, and expensive caps force users into paying for bundles to get flat rates. Some also do not have credit cards, so are unable to pay for post-paid services, or to shop online. Some elders do not have the interest or skills to go online.
- Participants thought that affordability should be linked to income, with subsidies or discounts for low income or fixed income residents.

7. Summary of Responses to the Questions

The following is a summary of responses by participants and is organized according to our research questions asked during the focus group session.

1. Devices used to access the Internet:

- Tablets and smartphones seemed the most prevalent; some also mentioned laptops. One participant said “most of the people in my house use [their mobile] phones [to go online].” Several also mentioned gaming consoles, and said they are used to access Facebook as well as to play online games. One person mentioned a desktop computer.

2. Where people access the Internet:

- Most of this group accessed the Internet at home. Some said they went online at work.
- There are also several locations for community access. The library has computers and Wi-Fi, but the facilities are available only during library hours. The tribal council office has some computers and Wi-Fi available for community residents. ESDC (Employment and Social Development Canada) has two computers available for job searches.
- The community hall has just set up Wi-Fi. Users have to be there when events are on, unless they sit outside. The building is not open at other times. A new sports complex will have a Wi-Fi hotspot.
- Wi-Fi can be accessed outside some buildings. There is Wi-Fi at the school, which is left on in summer. Sometimes students sit outside the school to access the Wi-Fi. One participant said “Sometimes people sit outside my house.” Concerning Wi-Fi that might require passwords, one participant said: “Once a password gets out, people have it.”
- Students from grade 6 on are expected to access the Internet and submit assignments online. Students can go to the library after school if they have no computer at home.

3. Applications used online:

- Residents use a wide variety of applications for information, entertainment, online services, and keeping in touch with family and friends.
- Social networking appeared to be the most popular application. Facebook was most mentioned, followed by Instagram, Snapchat and Twitter.
- Several people said they use the Internet to communicate with family members including grandchildren, and with friends. Skype and Facetime were most popular. One person said she called on Facebook quite often to communicate with grandchildren.
- For entertainment, people watch Netflix and YouTube, download or stream music, and play online games.

- People pay bills online: “No one goes to the bank to pay bills”, only to cash cheques.
 - Residents search for information; some mentioned using an online dictionary and online recipes. One respondent said “I don’t use a cookbook anymore.” One person said that Google solved many marital arguments (!)
 - Some have taken online courses from Athabasca University, Ontario Learn, Nipissing University and Quebec adult education.
 - Several people buy goods and e-books online. Some say there is better selection or choice online; one states that it is easier to send online purchases to friends. There is also a local “buy and sell”, online. Participants did not know of others people in the community selling goods or services online.
 - Some are concerned about the security of paying online; one mentioned not having a credit card, so that it was not possible to buy goods online. One was concerned that buying online might help a seller to smuggle goods; she had found a bag of beads with free shipping from China on eBay for 99 cents, but decided not to purchase.
4. **Connectivity:** (Although not formally included in the interview questions, connectivity topics and concerns were raised frequently.)
- Several people mentioned having bundles of Internet, cable TV, and phone (one said he did not use the phone, but the bundle was the cheapest option.)
 - Several said they had unlimited Internet at home – none specified speed. Some said they had upgraded from lower priced options with high overage charges.
 - Most did not use mobile service for video. One participant had bought an Android box and smart TV to watch movies.
 - Concerning telephone service, some people have a home landline, others just cell phone. More and more people in the community are getting rid of land lines. If they have unlimited access on a cell phone, they don’t need a landline. They also use Skype (see above) to talk to their kids.
 - Some were interested in getting Magic Jack (a discount VoIP phone service). Others said that it was not good quality, with static and hisses, and not worth using.
 - One person mentioned having apps to make phone calls on an iPad.
5. **Community content:**
- The participants could not think of any content produced by community members. Some mentioned local Facebook postings. They were not aware of any local businesses or services marketed online.
 - The band office and its departments have websites. The health centre and school also have websites. Some commented that the school website is used frequently, but one said that it is not updated very often.
 - A person in the band office manages its websites. Participants thought others in the community had skills to manage websites, but aren’t using them.
 - Major sources of local information are the community radio station, newsletter, flyers in the mail. The Band Office and Health Centre have newsletters. These are

popular – many people call about articles, misspellings. The newsletter is also available online and as an email; people can ask to be on their email list.

- People listen to the radio in their cars, but its reach is limited.
- There is talk about streaming the community radio station. They are testing streaming, which could be useful to reach people living outside the community. The New Liskeard radio station streams online.

6. Content in the Algonquin language:

- An Algonquin language translation app for iPhone and iPad was developed locally by the son of Algonquin language teacher. He has just released an updated version. It is used in school, and can be downloaded anywhere.
- Written Algonquin uses the Roman alphabet and regular keyboard (not syllabics). One participant said that he communicates with his cousins in Algonquin on Facebook for privacy – so that others don't know what they are saying.

7. Content about traditional activities:

- Facebook pages are the most popular ways to share information, including traditional events such as sweat lodges. A cultural affairs person in the community posts information on Facebook.
- The Timiskaming First Nation website also has a cultural page, pages for hockey games and other activities. Most said they do not use the website; some felt information was not updated frequently enough. They pointed out that the website is useful to provide information for “people away from the community.” About 40 percent of band members live off-reserve. One person also goes to the website to download and read archived newsletters.
- Participants also mentioned flyers in the mail and local radio as a source of information about cultural activities.
- One person said that access to Facebook is blocked at his workplace.

8. Availability of local digital technologies training and tech support:

- There does not appear to be any resource for training in digital technologies.
- People learn from each other, and from their kids. “Grandkids are teaching us.” “I am constantly teaching my husband about Facebook.”
- Some said they learned at work, but there was no official training. One person took courses on his own.
- Some had taken courses on software such as Excel and other Windows Office programs. Some employers offer upgrading courses.
- One said that a course could possibly be developed with ESDC.
- The community used to have a Learning Resource Centre which helped Elders, offered courses and help with MS Office, etc. It closed when the manager left (he was part of the focus group.) This was previously a CAP site. Some thought such a centre could still be useful for people without access to facilities or wanting to gain skills.

- A person at the band office who participated in the focus group said that part of her job is to help with ICT problems. She also helps at home. She learned on the job, and also took some training online. A few local people provide tech services as a sideline business, not a major business.
- The closest place to get help from a business is New Liskeard, but they “charge an arm and a leg,” and some stores have closed.

9. Problems or barriers to ICT adoption or use:

- The major problem raised by several participants is the price of connectivity. Other topics raised were online speed, the price of equipment and lack of facilities in the community.
- **Facilities:** There is no place for printing or scanning.
- **Speed:** Some said they needed higher speed or packages because several people in the house are online at the same time, for example, four kids running different games, TV, apps, etc.
- **Price of Connectivity:** Price is a challenge. People feel pricing is not fair. Various prices were cited:
 - \$54 / month - \$130/\$140 / month
 - Bundles at \$160/\$170 / month
 - One mentioned a price of \$90 but went over cap in 3 days. The choice was to pay at least \$50 per month for overage, or add \$30 per month to upgrade to a higher limit with basic cable and Internet.
 - One person tried to purchase a package with a large prepayment to qualify for a sign-up bonus, with the prepayment to be refunded after 3 months. However, she did not have a credit card so could not access the special offer.
 - One person said Parolink requires \$600 for (fixed wireless) equipment. [Their website currently lists an initial upfront payment of \$125.]
- Some people think Internet is a luxury compared to necessities like food and shelter, so they don't subscribe. The monthly cost of Internet access is small compared to some other items, but it's still high. If two people in the household aren't working, they couldn't afford it. Many people cannot afford it [NOTE: no specific numbers were given or available]. People on fixed income can't afford Internet access; for example, one person said she had received only \$600 per month while on assistance, so would not have been able to pay for Internet.
- For cell service, many people opt for pay-as-you-go rather than monthly plans to save costs. Plans are too expensive. Some use Wi-Fi for text messages and iMessenger; some use smartphones with Wi-Fi to avoid using up data on mobile plans.
- **Defining Internet affordability:** The group discussed how they would define affordability, and felt that the price should be “fair.” “Free would be nice”, but there was general agreement that price should be related to income: those on fixed or low incomes should have a reduced price.

- **Price for equipment:** Electronics are priced out of some people's range. Especially difficult to buy for children who want an iPad, or cell phone; it's too expensive. Notebooks have come down in price, but equipment is expensive if you want to buy for several kids in the family.
- Some post-secondary courses require Apple computers (Macs), but none are publicly available. Participants in the group said they have PCs because they are cheaper.
- One couple had to pay \$1,000 to upgrade their cell phones.
- One person felt skills are not really a barrier for most but then added people learn how to make the technologies work.
- Some Elders don't see the need for the Internet. One participant commented: "We show them funny videos" and they like it. For others in their 70s, "It's a constant learning curve" -- showing parents how to use a tablet, etc.
- Most people are involved in using technology for different purposes.
- Some people use it for work
- Kids are more up to speed. They like technology, and use it a lot
- Some Elders don't have knowledge or interest
- A smaller group is frustrated and feel that they have to use it but don't really want to. They are getting pushed to go online, to pay bills and to get services that are becoming online-only.
- **Credit cards and security:** Many people use credit cards for online shopping, but some don't have credit cards. Some worry about credit card information online. One person doesn't use PayPal, said she was "hacked too many times."
- **Software, content:** Several cited problems with Quebec government websites; many are in French only. Translation is not available on the site, or the "English" button cannot be found or does not work. Some try Google Translate to get information from these sites. People need to use the Internet for Quebec government information; otherwise, they have to travel to Rouyn to go to government office in person. If they don't speak French, they get poor service. Participants said the staff are rude or hard to understand, so people prefer to get information online and try to translate it themselves.
- Some people are frustrated that some government services are only available online.
- Some were frustrated when they were forced to upgrade to new software versions, such as windows update from XP to Vista.

10. Planning for future communication needs for the community:

The focus group members were unable to identify any one in Timiskaming involved in planning for future communication technology needs. Some felt "there are other priorities."

NOTE 1: Notice about Focus Groups Published in Timiskaming Education Newsletter



First Mile Connectivity Consortium
PO Box 104
Fredericton, NB E3B 4Y2
<http://www.firstmile.ca>
Phone toll-free: 1-877-737-5638 X 4522

How is Timiskaming First Nation and its citizens using digital technologies?

We invite you to participate in interviews to help understand how First Nations are using digital technologies across Canada.

**** 11am on February 12, 2016 at the Band Administration office ****

This research project is funded by Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada. It will be conducted by researchers from the First Mile Connectivity Consortium (FMCC) and Quebec's First Nations Education Council (FNEC) working with Timiskaming's Education Department.

The FMCC is a non-profit organization composed of First Nations telecommunications organizations and their associates. The FMCC is concerned with improving telecommunications in rural and remote communities. FMCC is working on a study to understand how Indigenous people across Canada's North use digital technologies such as computers, smartphones and the Internet.

We would like to interview community members who can help us understand how these technologies are used in Timiskaming, and if there are any problems or barriers to their use. We will be discussing how individuals use these technologies in your community, and also how other members of their household use them.

The interview will be a focus group with a maximum of 10 people and will take between 1 – 1.5 hours.

We are looking for participants from different walks of life who can talk about:
Their use of computers, smartphones and the Internet at home and at work
Use of computers, smartphone, and the Internet in their household
Internet use by youth and others in the community

We would also like to talk with some participants who do not use the Internet, or are familiar with people who do not use the Internet. We would like to include some participants who are familiar with use of the Internet at work places and in the community, such as:

Band office

Library, other public community access sites
Non-profit organizations
Government offices
Businesses: store, other business

People who sign up will be asked to provide some brief background information. Participants will receive a gift card after the videoconference.

**** Please sign up for the focus group at the front desk of the Band Office. ****

PLEASE NOTE THAT BECAUSE OF THE LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY, IT MAY NOT BE POSSIBLE FOR EVERYONE WHO SIGNS UP TO PARTICIPATE.

NOTE 2: Sign-up Sheet: Focus Group on Using Digital Technologies

Name	Contact Info	Gender	Age	I use the Internet				OR – I don’t use the Internet
				At Home	At Work	At School	Other	

NOTE 3: Information to Guide Selection of Focus Group Participants:

We are working on a study funded by the federal government to understand how Indigenous people in the North use digital technologies such as computers, smartphones and the Internet. We would like to interview community members who can help us understand how these technologies are used in Timiskaming, and if there are any problems or barriers to use that people encounter.

The interview will take the form of a focus group of a maximum of 10 people.

We will primarily be discussing how individuals use these technologies, and also how other members of their household use them.

We would like some participants who can talk about:

Their own use of computers, smartphones and the Internet

Use of computers, smartphone, Internet in their household

Some participants who are familiar with youth use of Internet

Some participants who are familiar with Elders' use of the Internet, or why they do not use the Internet

We would also like to include some participants who are familiar with use of the Internet at work places and in the community, such as:

Band office

Library, other community access

Nonprofit organizations

Government offices

Businesses: store, other business

Finally, we would like to include people who do not use the Internet or technologies like computers or smart phones.

We created a sign-up sheet for this project at the Band Office. While we appreciate everyone who signs up, we can only host a maximum of 10 participants in the focus group.

**** All participants will receive a small gift for their participation. ****

NOTE 4: Focus Group Instructions for Community Research Coordinator

Subject: Timiskaming Technology Focus Group on Feb. 12

Hello Audra,

Thanks for helping us with the Timiskaming focus group on Friday. I was just talking to Arline and she told me that you can help us set up the videoconference system, greet people when they arrive at the Band Office and go through the 'informed consent'.

I'll call you on Friday morning (10:30am your time) to check in.

Tim Whiteduck from FNEC and researcher Heather Hudson (cc'd here) will be involved in the focus groups. FNEC is helping with the videoconference link.

Please see below for a list of the steps involved.

I'm not sure if Arline is planning to provide participants with cash or with a Walmart gift certificate. Can you check with her and she'll give you that to provide for the participants.

I attached the 'Consent Form'. Can you please go through this with participants and ask them to sign it. Then collect the signed copies and pass them on to Arline, who can mail them to us.

I also attached a list of the questions we'll be asking in the focus group.

If you have any questions about any of this, my cell is 780-288-7151.

Have a good day, talk to you soon,

Rob

Here are the steps:

- 1) Work with Tim to set up videoconference system to connect Timiskaming with FNEC and Rob/Heather (researchers)
- 2) Greet participants and tick them off the sign-up sheet.
- 3) Go through the 'informed consent' agreement. This is required for ethics. I can talk through it with you on Monday.

4) Ask participants to sign the 'informed consent' agreement (see attached). Collect signed sheets.

5) Focus group takes place

6) Once focus group ends, hand out money/gift card to participants.

7) Mail signed 'informed consent' agreements to project researchers.

I think this is all the steps but I will go through it again on Monday to make sure.

Thanks again for your help with this project! Call any time if you have questions: 1-780-288-7151.

Have a good weekend and I'll talk to you on Monday,

Rob

NOTE 5: Consent Form for Timiskaming Focus Group Participants



First Mile Connectivity Consortium
PO Box 104
Fredericton, NB E3B 4Y2
<http://www.firstmile.ca>
Phone toll-free: 1-877-737-5638 X 4522

Project Information and Consent Form – Videoconference Focus Groups in Timiskaming

The community coordinator will review the following information verbally with participants and ask them for written consent. A copy of this project and consent information sheet will be distributed to all participants.

Important Information

You are being asked to participate in a research project funded by the department of Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada. The research focuses on digital technology adoption in Northern Indigenous communities. The information provided below will help you understand exactly what is being asked of you. Please read this form carefully and ask all the questions you want before deciding to participate or not in this research. Please take whatever time you need to reach your decision, and consult with others if you wish. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary.

This research project has been reviewed and approved by the Education Department in Timiskaming First Nation. The project researchers have been trained to conduct research in a way that is respectful of participating communities. If you have any questions or concerns about this research project, please contact the project researcher Rob McMahon. Contact information is at the bottom of this form.

Description of the Project

This research project will investigate how people living in Timiskaming are adopting digital technologies such as social media applications and broadband networks. This research is funded by the department of Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada. It will contribute to efforts to improve access to digital technologies to meet the needs of the people and organizations in Northern Indigenous communities. We are also researching what methods can be used to learn more about use of digital technologies in the North so that information may be collected in other communities in the future.

A summary of the comments made in the focus group will be provided to the Timiskaming Education Department. This work will result in a report submitted to the department of Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada. The results of the report will be publicly available. Project researchers may use some of the data collected in this research for

future academic publications but in the event that the information is used in such a way, the involved researcher(s) will apply to their university Research Ethics Board to receive approval.

Two First Nations technology organizations are partners in this research project and are providing feedback and support on research design, methods and questions:

First Nations Education Council based in Wendake, Quebec

First Nations Technology Council based in Vancouver, B.C.

Procedure

The focus group involves participating in a videoconference during which you and others will discuss digital technology adoption in your community with trained researchers. This will take about one hour to an hour and a half. The discussion is **NOT** confidential, but your comments will remain anonymous. Anything you say at the videoconference focus group can be made available to the larger community, other communities, the First Nations organization partners, and the researchers, the department of Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, and the general public. You should always be careful when disclosing personal information and should not disclose personal information related to other members of the focus group.

The focus group is recorded; written transcripts will be made of the recording and then the original recording will be archived. Participants' names will NOT appear in any reports or articles about the research. The information gathered will be analyzed to provide overall findings and recommendations to the department of Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada regarding digital technology adoption in Northern Indigenous communities. You are welcome to contact the project researcher Rob McMahon to request publicly available documents on this study.

Potential Harms and Benefits

The researchers are not aware of any risks or discomforts associated with your participation in this research. If potential harms are discovered, you will be informed as soon as possible. Your participation will contribute to our effort in learning about digital technology adoption and First Nation communities, and will be included in a publicly available report to Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada.

Privacy and Confidentiality

Despite the request to respect others' privacy, researchers cannot control what other participants do with the information shared during the focus group after the study is over. All data, notes, and transcripts are stored in a locked office and all information gathered from you will be confidential. Such data will be retained for at most 12 months before it is destroyed. Data from the study will be summarized to provide overall findings and recommendations for the research team and your identity will not be revealed.

Compensation

You will be given an honorarium for your participation and time. You will be given this compensation when the focus group has been completed.

Legal Rights

By accepting this consent form, you are not waiving any of your legal rights.

Voluntary Participation and Right to Withdraw

Your participation is completely voluntary and you may end your participation in the focus group at any time, with the understanding that any contributions you have made in the focus group up until that point will remain in the recording and transcript of the focus group.

Contact Information

For more information about this research project, please contact: Project Researcher: Rob McMahon, First Mile Connectivity Consortium, Edmonton, AB. Tel: 1-780-288-7151, rob.mcmahon@firstmile.ca

Signatures

Participant

I, _____, have read and understand the information given in this form and all my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I have had sufficient time to consider whether or not to participate in the study and consent to participate. I understand that my participation is completely voluntary and that I may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

Signature

Date

Community Coordinator

To the best of my knowledge, the information on this consent form and the information I have provided in answering any questions fairly represents the research study. I am committed to participating in this study in compliance with all ethical standards that apply to projects that involve human subjects. I will ensure that the participant receives a copy of this consent form.

Name

Signature

Date