



ACADEMY OF
THE SOCIAL SCIENCES
IN AUSTRALIA

“Enhancing public organisations’ digital literacy to facilitate online engagement”

Research team

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Project dates

1 August 2013 to 31 July 2014

Project summary

The project aimed to uncover the ICT training and development needs from small and medium sized public organisations to facilitate digital communications with the public, particularly in a rural setting.

For the purposes of identifying the issues related to rural connectivity, the team held a workshop on 13 May 2014 with 7 local governments in the Southern Inland area of New South Wales. Participants from the local governments included two mayors, one councillor, one general manager, five economic development officers, two information/system operators, one marketing officer and one corporate service officer. In addition to the local governments, two officers from Regional Development Australia (RDA) Southern Inland, one senior government official from the federal Department of Communications, one commercial mobile app provider, one representative from Australia’s Information and Communications Technology Research Centre of Excellence (NICTA), and six academics participated in the discussion. The range of topics discussed at the workshop include the state of the rural digital divide in Australia and the NSW Southern Inland region, technological and policy issues surrounding internet connectivity, and potential areas to develop digital engagement strategies.

Project outcome

1. Two conference papers (accepted)

Park, S., Freeman, J., Middleton, C., Allen, M., Eckermann, R., & Everson, R. (forthcoming). The multi-layers of digital exclusion in rural Australia, Proceedings of the 48th Annual Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences (Jan 5-8, 2015, Kauai), Computer Society Press.

Middleton, C. & Park, S. (2014). Waiting for the National Broadband Network: Challenges of connectivity in rural Australia, 20th International Telecommunications Society Biennial



Conference, The Net and the Internet: Emerging Markets and Policy. (Nov 30-Dec 3, 2014, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil).

2. One journal article (under review)

Freeman, J. & Park, S. Rural Realities: Digital Communication Challenges for Rural Local Governments, Australian Journal of Telecommunications and Digital.

3. Continued collaboration with Boorowa community

A follow-up workshop with community members on rural digital inclusion was held in Aug 2014 as part of the ongoing pursuit into rural connectivity

4. Grant applications

Currently the team is considering development of the project into a grant proposal to be submitted in 2014-2015

Sora Park, University of Canberra
September 2014

