Communication Issues for Volunteer Groups in Rural Canada

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Purpose

- Examine the challenges that volunteer groups face in enhancing their capacity to use communication technology
- Role of volunteer groups in rural areas
- Challenges and problems volunteer groups face
- Case study of Springhill, NS
- Extension of the Innovative Services Project

Methodology

- Literature Review
    - Volunteer Groups in Rural Canada
    - Communication and its Relationship with the Voluntary Sector
    - ICT's and its Use by the Rural Voluntary Sector
- Key Information Interviews
- Data Analysis

Context

- Volunteers are the "fabric of the community"
- Challenges and problems they are facing
- Team learning and building capacity
- VolNet
- Communication - glue, oil and web
- Information and Communication Technologies (ICT's)
- Community Informatics

Interview Groups

- The Rotary Club of Springhill
- Springhill Heritage Group
- All Saints Hospital Auxuliary
- IODE (Imperial Order of Daughters of the Empire)
- Communities in Bloom

Key Findings

- Unconsciously evolved Internet usage
- More extensive connections with external groups due to Internet
- Lack of use of local CAP site by organizations
- No future plans regarding Internet usage
- An effective ICT network due to social organizational and human capacity

Conclusions

- Disconnect between CAP site and organizations
- Low team learning capacity
- Reliable communication methods
- Increasing importance of Internet usage in Springhill's organizations
- But…. Limited community informatics system