

Public Internet and WiFi Project – Welcome Bay Community Centre

For Welcome Bay, a Tauranga suburb identified in the Acorn Foundation Vital Signs Report 2015 as having the least satisfaction with belonging and engagement, a gift and technological leap forward via free internet access hotspot and internet enabled computers for all members of public, at the heart of their neighbourhood, delivered for the very first time to a community in the Bay of Plenty.

This project provides support to those who will seek and apply for work online, access online bill payments and banking, engage with social services online, provide a facility to create and print CVs, and for the local youth, a community engagement tool and bountiful ability to undertake research online, or complete digital homework, not to mention, giving any mobile device unlimited (albeit content filtered), internet access for social media and communication technologies.

Funding granted through InternetNZ

Backed by Community Grant Funding from InternetNZ in October 2015, a Public Private Partnership (PPP) was established by free-lance Tauranga IT professional, Mr. Antoon Moonen on behalf of the Welcome Bay Community Centre Inc. with a consortium of companies and individuals, covering the design, construction, and maintenance, of an infrastructure asset at the Welcome Bay Community Centre for the support and delivery of free public internet access.

InternetNZ is a non-profit open membership organisation dedicated to protecting and promoting the Internet in New Zealand and fostering a coordinated, cooperative approach to its ongoing development. InternetNZ offers community grants to individuals or organisations for projects and activities focused on the Internet.

Project Deliverables

The InternetNZ funded project delivered a range of important solutions to the Community Centre:

1. Two public-access, highly-featured workstation kiosks on wheels, with free internet-access and printing capability were installed inside at the Community Centre for extreme flexibility as to their proximity indoors.
2. Further public internet access for private mobile devices was provided through three outdoor rated Ubiquiti "Unifi" access points for the area containing Welcome Bay Hall, the Community Centre, surrounding Waitaha Reserve, and also encompassing the playground adjacent to the Centre.
3. At the same time, the Community Centre was installed with Fibre, and VOIP implemented, thereby increasing the number of phone lines from one to three, and supported further by network segmentation and a network attached storage (NAS) solution.

Creative Project Management

The challenge in this case, was that the project budget was calculated at between \$9,062 and \$12,514, so it became immediately clear that some careful and potentially creative project management and collaboration with business sector was required to bring the project in on, or under the funding grant of just \$9,062 which was awarded by InternetNZ.

Consortium of Private Partners

In order to lower the project costs and reduce the risk of exceeding budget while delivering the planned outcomes, it became necessary to increase the project management effort and community engagement at large to approach various third parties with the capability, capacity and willingness to lend support for this community IT project.

Bay of Plenty Regional Council

Kindly handed over 2 identical workstation computers with sufficient CPU and 4GB RAM for the public kiosks. Now configured to reimage C drives with Win 10, to original setup at every restart.

PB Tech

Kiosk Philips monitors with built in webcam, microphone and speakers, keyboards, mice and wireless adapters and additional supporting equipment supplied to Community Centre at not-for-profit charitable pricing, thereby lowering budgeted expenses.

Interlink Communications Limited

A local ICT company working with Voice, Data, Wireless, Fibre and Audio Visual Solutions, providing service, support and intelligent solutions for businesses in the Bay of Plenty, donated the 150m of CAT6 network cable, wall outlets, plugs and conduit. They also offered to send staff to test the network wiring after laying, although this wasn't required due to testing equipment on-hand.

Full Flavour

Locally owned and operated ISP provided a generous fibre internet and phone line solution for the Community Centre that effectively increased the internet bandwidth to unlimited and tripled the phone lines at the same cost Spark was charging for one copper line and limited internet.

Technologywise

The main technology partner for this project, installing and configuring the Access Points, VOIP and NAS, providing exceptional free pre-sales support and finally providing additional savings by hosting the WiFi controller on their own servers in "the cloud" at no ongoing cost to the Community Centre. This lead partner in the project was one of the keys to our success, also with their willingness to support the Avonmore Tertiary Students to maximise their learning potential in the project.

Avonmore Tertiary Institute Tauranga

The unanticipated added value of the entire approach and what saved the project budget without a doubt was the inclusion of three IT tertiary students (all IITP Student members) into the project early on and assigning parcels of work in stages. These young men, built the kiosk computers to detailed specification, undertook all of the network cabling in the ceilings over a couple of weekends and undertook all the crimping of the plugs and cables, and played an exceptional role at all times through the lifespan of the project. It was a pleasure to support and see their appreciation for being included in this exciting project and for them, a real-life project making measureable difference to people in our community, and one for which they can feel justly proud.

Antoon Moonen – Project Manager

Having begun working in IT sector in Wellington at around 1990, and with strong technical capacity, Antoon has excelled in IT sales, business development and project management for the likes of DEC, EDS and SSS before heading to Europe for Operational Management roles in international manufacturing companies. Returning after 11 years to give the new children in tow some just-in-time NZ upbringing, he has maintained and increased his IT technical knowledge to enhance his business and project leadership skills to bring about the right support to projects such as this one.

Public Private Partnership (PPP)

For Tauranga, we have proven as a community that we have the zeal to bring together students, non-profits, public sector, private sector and individuals to build a resilient IT solution for the benefit of an entire community. Problems were always confronted with solutions and everyone went the extra mile. We look forward in the coming months to the individual success stories that will arise from the people who will become reliant on this unique offering in the city.