

Conclusion

Future Needs and Opportunities

In 2016, the CRTC declared broadband internet to be a basic telecommunications service in Canada¹⁷⁷. This is analogous to other countries that declared the internet a basic human right, starting with Estonia in 2000. Indeed, Alberta began development of the Alberta SuperNet that same year, in part to improve internet access for all Albertans. Twenty years later, the need for ubiquitous broadband internet was amplified by the global lockdowns imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic¹⁷⁸.

According to Cloudflare, countries like the U.S., Canada, Australia, and Brazil experienced jumps in network usage of 40-50% after the rise of the pandemic in 2020. As we move towards a post-pandemic world, it is likely that recent shifts in internet use for work and education will become permanent¹⁷⁹. This puts those without adequate broadband services (as well as without adequate access to computing technologies) at a serious social and economic disadvantage.

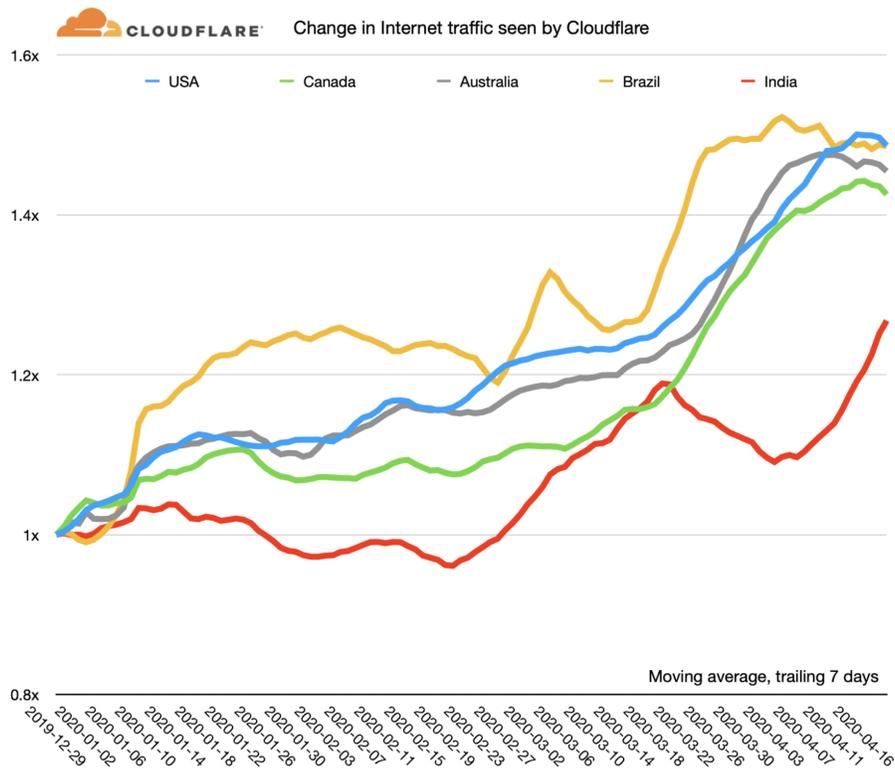


Figure 29. Change in internet traffic levels in the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown in 2020¹⁸⁰.

Conclusion

The future of Alberta's economy is data. And to grow this economy, Alberta needs to invest more strategically in its foundational infrastructure, specifically networking. To grow the economy, Alberta needs to start investing more strategically in its foundational networking infrastructure.

There is an opportunity for Alberta to build a coordinated approach and framework to grow its digital infrastructure. We all share the responsibility in this effort, particularly if we hope to develop a knowledge-based economy supported by a comprehensive and sustainable digital infrastructure system. The information presented in this report provides a starting point. Strong leadership is required by all sectors to build and move forward with a clear and organized digital infrastructure agenda.

This report was developed by Cybera, Alberta's not-for-profit technology accelerator, with support from Erwin Loewen.

Appendices

About Cybera

Acknowledgements

References

¹⁷⁷CBC. [CRTC declares broadband internet access a basic service](#) | CBC News. 22 December 2016.

¹⁷⁸CBC. [If a crisis like COVID-19 hasn't pushed government to take action to improve broadband access, what can?](#) | CBC News. 23 August 2020.

¹⁷⁹Forbes. [Internet Service Providers Need To Prepare For The Post-Pandemic Era](#). 15 July 2020.

¹⁸⁰Cloudflare. [Internet performance during the COVID-19 emergency \(cloudflare.com\)](#). 23 April 2020.