At a Glance - Networking in Alberta

Globally, the demand for bandwidth is increasing exponentially. Alberta is also seeing an increased demand for bandwidth, as more education and work activities are carried out online, and as high-bandwidth mobile platforms become more ubiquitous.

Currently, Alberta has two high-speed public fibre networks: the research and education network, CyberaNet, and the province-wide fibre optic network, the Alberta SuperNet. Both are available to a select portion of the population. Commercially, services are provided by the big three telecommunications providers — TELUS, Bell and Rogers — in addition to a number of regional competitors, most notably the Calgary-based Shaw Communications (although on March 15, 2021, Rogers announced a plan to acquire Shaw in a $26B merger, a deal which would eliminate Shaw as a regional competitor. As of the publication of this report, the deal is pending regulatory approval).

The reach, bandwidth, and prices these providers offer can vary, and rural areas continue to struggle to obtain internet connections at a cost and speed comparable to the province's urban areas.

By the Numbers...

- Percentage of Canadians in the lowest income quintile with a home internet subscription (as of 2019): **65%**[1]
- Percentage of Canadian households without access to at least 50 Mbps download and 1 Mbps upload (as of 2019): **16%**
- Median download speed in Canadian cities in 2021: **51.09 Mbps**
- Median rural download speeds in 2019: **9.74 Mbps**[2]
- Availability of internet service of 50 Mbps download and 10 Mbps upload with unlimited data in rural Alberta: **33.2**%

References

[1]Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) . Communications Monitoring Report 2020, pg. 28

[2]Canadian Internet Registration Authority (CIRA). Canada's Internet Equity Gap: Rural residents suffer with inferior service during pandemic. Accessed 08 July 2021.