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The Impact of Ultra-Fast Broadband on Telehealth in New Zealand

by

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Abstract

In recent years, many countries around the world have introduced Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) in their healthcare industry, in a bid to improve their productivity and the effectiveness of their services, triggering the eHealth phenomenon. As a component of eHealth, telehealth— which refers to a set of expertise and methods that integrate the world of ICT with the healthcare sector, providing medical care and education over a distance— is revolutionizing the healthcare sector.

One of the most important ICTs used in the provision of telehealth is broadband internet. The bandwidth of the broadband connection determines the speed and quality of communications. Ultra-fast broadband— currently defined as connections with bandwidth greater than 100Mbps for downloads and 50Mbps for uploads— has made possible connections and communications on a scale and of a quality never before possible. The capacity to traverse geographical boundaries in real time and transfer large amounts of information has made ultra-fast broadband a sought-after tool in many businesses.

The main objective of this research is to study the impact of ultra-fast broadband internet on the development and quality of telehealth systems, especially in New Zealand. This thesis provides an overview of current broadband technologies available for running successful telehealth services, and studies the application and importance of broadband internet in the field of healthcare. It also provides a summary of the evolution of the use of ICTs, broadband technologies in particular, by health systems and a brief look at the future of these technologies in healthcare sectors, mainly in New Zealand.
This thesis will conclude the importance of broadband internet in telehealth and its related services, and that the provision of telehealth would be near to impossible without ICTs such as broadband. This thesis will also conclude the introduction of ultra-fast broadband into telehealth in New Zealand to be a significant step forward as evident in telehealth projects overseas.
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## Contents

1 Introduction 1

1.1 Background and Context .......................... 1

1.2 Terminology ..................................... 3

1.2.1 Information and Communications Technology .... 3

1.2.2 Bandwidth and Ultra-Fast Broadband ............. 3

1.2.3 eHealth ....................................... 4

1.2.4 Telehealth ..................................... 5

1.2.5 Telemedicine ................................... 6

1.2.6 Telecare ....................................... 6

1.3 Research Questions and Objectives .................. 7

1.4 Thesis Outline .................................... 8

2 Design and Methodology 11

2.1 Research Methodology .............................. 11

2.1.1 Determining the Domain of Interest ............. 12

2.1.2 Specifying the Focusing Questions .............. 12

2.1.3 Collecting Relevant Information ................ 13

2.1.4 Critiquing the Collected Information .......... 14

2.1.5 Interpreting Observations and Determining Patterns 14

2.1.6 Writing the Thesis ............................ 15

2.2 The Process of Collecting Information .............. 15
3 Broadband Technology 17
  3.1 The Internet and Broadband ..................... 17
  3.2 Types of Broadband .................................. 20
    3.2.1 Fixed-Line Broadband ......................... 21
      3.2.1.1 Digital Subscribers Line (DSL) ........ 21
      3.2.1.2 Hybrid Fibre Coaxial (HFC) .......... 22
      3.2.1.3 Broadband Powerline (BPL) .......... 23
      3.2.1.4 Fibre to the Home/Curb (FTTH) .... 23
    3.2.2 Wireless Broadband ......................... 24
      3.2.2.1 Microwave Links ......................... 24
      3.2.2.2 Multichannel Multipoint Distribution Service (MMDS) ........ 24
      3.2.2.3 Local Multipoint Distribution Service (LMDS) ...... 25
      3.2.2.4 Free Space Optics (FOS) .............. 26
      3.2.2.5 Wireless Fidelity (WiFi) ............ 26
      3.2.2.6 Worldwide Interoperability for Microwave Access (WiMAX) .......... 28
      3.2.2.7 Direct Broadcast Satellite (DBS) ...... 29
      3.2.2.8 Cellular Mobile Networks ............ 29
  3.3 New Zealand’s Network Infrastructure ............. 31

4 Telehealth and Related Applications: A Review of Literature 35
  4.1 Telehealth ......................................... 35
    4.1.1 Types of Telehealth ............................ 36
      4.1.1.1 Synchronous Telehealth (real time) ........ 36
      4.1.1.2 Asynchronous Telehealth (store and forward) 36
      4.1.1.3 Tele-homecare and Tele-monitoring .......... 37
    4.1.2 Examples of Telehealth ....................... 38
    4.1.3 Advantages and Disadvantages of Telehealth .......... 38
      4.1.3.1 Advantages ............................. 39
      4.1.3.2 Disadvantages .......................... 41
CONTENTS

4.1.4 Regulatory Aspects of Telehealth .......................... 42
4.2 Current Telehealth Projects ..................................... 44
  4.2.1 International Telehealth Projects ......................... 44
    4.2.1.1 Denmark ........................................... 44
    4.2.1.2 United States of America .......................... 45
    4.2.1.3 Australia .......................................... 47
    4.2.1.4 England ........................................... 51
    4.2.1.5 Scotland ........................................... 51
    4.2.1.6 Norway ............................................. 52
  4.2.2 New Zealand Telehealth Projects ............................ 52
    4.2.2.1 Videoconferencing Case Study ....................... 54
    4.2.2.2 Closing the Distance Case Study ..................... 54
    4.2.2.3 Cutting-edge Care in the “Wop Wops” Case Study .... 55
    4.2.2.4 Faster Access to Diagnostics Case Study ............ 55
4.3 Telehealth’s Reliance on Broadband ............................... 56
  4.3.1 Medical Procedures Requiring Broadband .................. 57
    4.3.1.1 Telesurgery ......................................... 58
    4.3.1.2 Tele-education and Tele-learning ................... 58
    4.3.1.3 Tele-monitoring and Telecare ...................... 59
  4.3.2 Benefits of using Broadband in Healthcare ................ 60
4.4 Other Technical/Digital Components of eHealth .................. 61
  4.4.1 Electronic Health Records (EHRs) .......................... 61
  4.4.2 Mobile Health ........................................... 64
  4.4.3 Cloud Computing ......................................... 65
  4.4.4 Big Data and Data Quality ................................ 66
  4.4.5 Data Warehouses and Data Mining ........................ 68
  4.4.6 Tablets and the iPad ..................................... 70
  4.4.7 Health 2.0 and Social Networking ........................ 72

5 Discussion ................................................................... 75
  5.1 Broadband in New Zealand ................................. 76
CONTENTS

5.2 Impact of UFB on Telehealth .......................... 78
  5.2.1 Medical Disciplines that will Benefit from UFB .... 79
    5.2.1.1 Dermatology .................................. 79
    5.2.1.2 Radiology ...................................... 80
    5.2.1.3 Mental Health ................................. 80
    5.2.1.4 Cardiology ..................................... 80
    5.2.1.5 Speech-Language Pathology ............... 80
  5.2.2 Telehealth Services that will Benefit from UFB .... 81
    5.2.2.1 Patient Health Records .................. 81
    5.2.2.2 Medical Imagery ............................. 82
    5.2.2.3 Tele-monitoring .............................. 82
    5.2.2.4 Tele-consultation and Tele-education .... 82
    5.2.2.5 Referrals and Prescriptions ........... 83
    5.2.2.6 Telesurgery ................................ 83
  5.2.3 Development of Telehealth in Different Countries .. 83
  5.2.4 Development of Telehealth in Rural Areas .......... 85
  5.3 Future of Telehealth in New Zealand .................. 88
    5.3.1 Barriers in the Development of Telehealth ...... 89
      5.3.1.1 Information and Communication Technologies .... 89
      5.3.1.2 Ethical Issues ............................ 89
      5.3.1.3 Mindset of Practitioners and Patients .... 90
      5.3.1.4 Limited Interoperability of Telehealth Systems .... 90
      5.3.1.5 Lack of Incentives and Publicizing Success Stories .......... 90

6 Conclusion ............................................ 91

Bibliography ............................................ 106