

The Pacific

1. Economic and Social Impact of ICT in the Pacific

A new report has highlighted the impacts of improved access to telecommunications infrastructure and services now being seen across the South Pacific and potential for greater information communications technology (ICT)-enabled development across the region.

This past decade has seen an extraordinary increase in access to mobile phone services in the region, including to some of the Pacific's most remote areas and islands, as significantly improved market conditions have encouraged investment by the private sector and existing operators.

"Here in Tonga, where we landed a submarine cable financed by the Asian Development Bank and World Bank in August 2013, we have seen greatly improved access to high-speed Internet (particularly mobile) and falling prices," said Deputy Prime Minister Sovaleni.

"Yet this report is not just about the technologies themselves; it is about the impact they are having on our communities and economies, enabling us to leapfrog over more traditional, outdated and expensive systems of the past, and to transform our lives."

The High Commissioner for Australia, Brett Aldam, said Australia was pleased to be co-financing the ICT study through its support for the PRIF, because "Australia recognised the critical need to modernise communications in the Pacific in order to generate increased economic growth and social development."

Sanjivi Rajasingham, Director of the Pacific Region Infrastructure Facility (PRIF), said the report would help Pacific governments, telecoms operators, regulators and the private sector to identify opportunities for investment in technology-enabled services. This includes a list of 10 specific 'intervention points', which include the further strengthening of international connectivity through submarine cables, new pricing structures and competition, to the use of e-government and applications designed to boost tourism and exports, small industries, and innovative job creation.

"As the Pacific has gained access to significantly improved technology, better access, far cheaper mobile phones, calls, text and data, the pace of change in the Pacific has been extraordinary," said Natasha Beschorner, Senior ICT Policy Specialist at The World Bank and Lead Coordinator of the PRIF ICT Sector Working Group, who introduced the report's key findings.

"The changes have been widespread across sectors including agriculture, fisheries, tourism, education, health and financial services. "Importantly, this report shows the opportunities that are now possible in the Pacific, and makes recommendations for governments, policy-makers and the private sector to answer the question, 'Where to next?'"

Changes already seen in the Pacific, which have been highlighted in the Economic and Social Impact of ICT in the Pacific report, include:

- Mobile coverage across Fiji, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu has jumped from less than half of the population in 2005 to 93% of the population in 2014.
- The cost of mobile calls declined by one third between 2005 and 2014.
- The percentage of cell phones in Pacific households rose from 49% in 2007 to 93% in 2014.
- International internet bandwidth jumped over 1500% between 2007 and 2014, rising from less than 100 Megabits per second to over 1 Gigabits per second (excluding Fiji, which was already connected to a submarine cable in 2000).

Recommendations for governments, policy-makers and development partners for the coming years that are in the report include:

- Strengthening of government and regulatory agencies to ensure that access to communications technology remains competitive, fairly-priced and accessible to all.
- Development of basic digital literacy amongst the general public.
- Putting the Pacific online: Support for increased communications technology use by governments to deliver services directly to citizens and business.
- Support for applications such as online health, education, trade facilitation services
- Investments in information communications technology skills – including government-industry partnerships – to build employment opportunities that are now possible with the increased availability of affordable broadband internet.

To read the Economic and Social Impact of ICT in the Pacific report, visit www.theprif.org/index.php/resources/document-library/121-prif-ict-study-report-2015



In groups of 3, read the article above and present to the class at least 5 major impacts of digital technologies that are also visible here in Tonga.



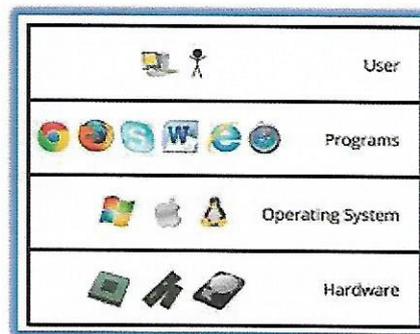
Activity 1.2

1. State some of the visible impact of digital technologies here in Tonga.
2. Outline the changes that have benefited Tonga over the years due to the use of digital technologies.

Computer systems

1. Computer system

There are Four (4) major components of a computer system.



Functions of a computer system

i. User

This is often referred to as the computer user or end user. A user is a person who uses a computer or network service. A user often has a user account and is identified by a username (also user name) or login name.

Users generally use a computer or hand held device without technical knowledge of the processes working in the background of the system. On the other hand, Power Users use advanced features of programs or applications therefore need the technical knowledge to do so.

ii. Programs or Application

A computer program or application is a type of software that allows you to perform specific tasks. Applications for desktop or laptop computers are sometimes called Desktop Applications, and those for mobile (or handheld / portable) devices are called