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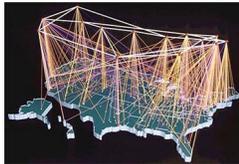
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Connected Communities: A blueprint for the cities of tomorrow

Posted By Guy Daniels , 27 May 2010 | 0 Comments | ⭐⭐⭐ (0)

Tags: Connected States Smart Cities

Connected States, Day 7. Wednesday May 26: Dublin, OH. I fired up my new iPad last night and download some incredible apps, one being Marvel's comic reader, which brought back memories of Britain's much-loved comic of the 1950s, The Eagle. The cover story of The Eagle was "Dan Dare: pilot of the Future." I'm not sure what the intrepid space explorer would make of Earth in 2010, but we spent the day in a city that has a lot to teach the urban planners designing the smart cities of our future.

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Dana McDaniel may not be a pilot of the future, but he is certainly one of the architects of it. As deputy city manager of Dublin, on the outskirts of Columbus Ohio, he has overseen the growth of this relatively new city into one of the best connected cities in the US. In fact, it was chosen as one of only two US cities to be considered by the ICF for its Intelligent Community of the Year award this year.

In 1970 the population was 681; today it is over 42,000. It is home to over 3,000 businesses, and despite hosting some major Fortune 500 companies, the average Dublin business has just seven employees. A state of the art fibre network, with overlaid wifi coverage, is the secret to the city's success. Dublin benefitted from the telecoms deregulation act of 1996, although it didn't seem like it at the time. After investing a considerable sum in digging up the roads to lay fibre conduit, the passing of the act caused a major rethink. The outcome, after a lot of hard work, was ready access for competing fibre companies plus a network of its own for the city to use as it saw fit.

Today, the Dublink network connects the city's building and services, together with schools and hospitals. The Ohio Supercomputer Center uses Dublink to connect thousands of elementary and secondary school students with colleges, universities, hospitals and public broadcasting stations. The Central Ohio Research Network also rides on Dublink, and connects not only research centres but also hospitals for record-sharing, remote surgery and patient monitoring.

We interviewed Dana and found out more about the city's network and its plans for the future, which could include an additional WiMAX network. But as he told us, after

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years of pain in building the network and connecting the community, after years of "climbing the roller coaster", they can now start to really exploit their resource and enjoy the ride.

We must thank Dana's assistant Tammy for helping us get in touch with Chaz Freutel at the Dublin Entrepreneurial Center and Chris Harris of High Speed Air, who also contributed to today's filming.

Tomorrow we're in Indianapolis, where we hope to be looking at transport systems…

In the meantime, please keep the ideas coming in, you've sent some great ones so far, but we could always use more. I'll reply to them all. Email me at guy@telecomtv.com.

Guy Daniels

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