

Case Studies

Noorderpoort College Groningen

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Community Network Groningen

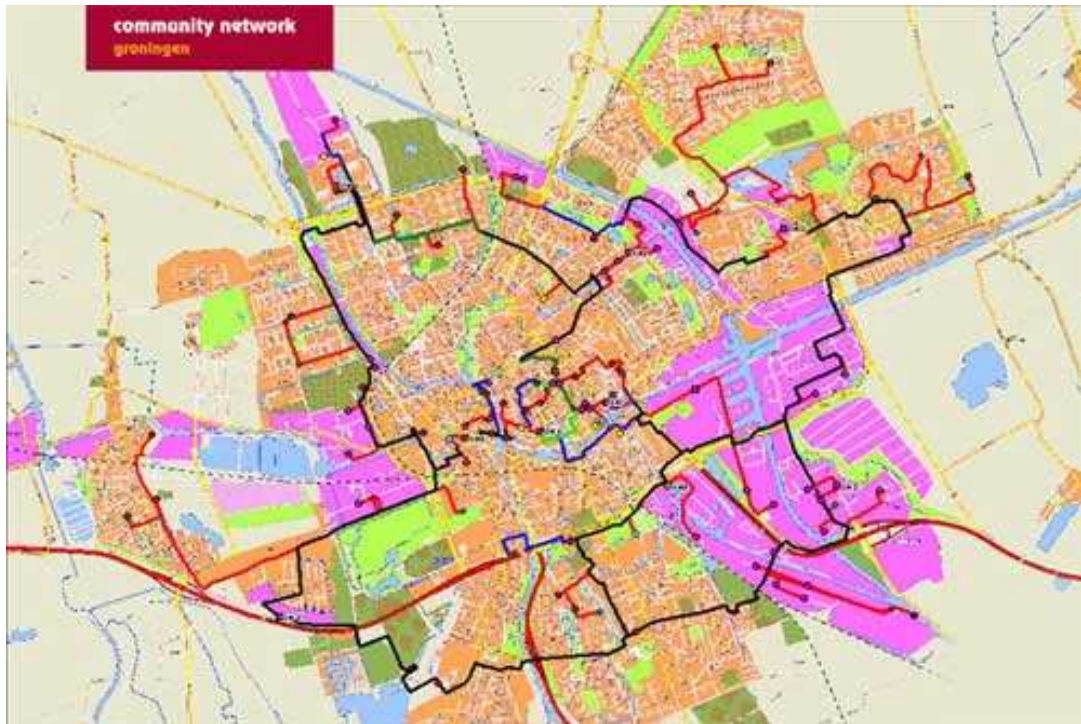
Community Network Groningen is a glassfiber-network in the city of Groningen, the Netherlands. It came into existence based on the initiative of six local respectively regional organisations and is for open use, so everyone can join in. These organisations, who can be called big consumers of services, joint forces and started the initiative: the municipality of Groningen, the University of Groningen, the Noorderpoort College, the Hanze University, TCN/SIG Realestate, and Biblionet, a network of libraries in the region North Netherlands. They aim of the Community Network is better competition of the local telecom-market and a growing number of users that can make use of affordable broadband-connections.

Aim of the launching customers - and shareholders as well - is the growth of the network. Yields made are primarily targeted for connecting schools, community centres, health care centres and projects for society. With these projects we want to innovate and strengthen cohesion in the community.

Community Network is an ‘open network’: the infrastructure is separate from the services. As connected organisation you have complete freedom to chose any service-supplier on Groningen Internet Exchange (GNIX). This improved market competition! Prices have gone down and supply is enlarged: about 30 suppliers offer their services at GNIX.

Community Network is a new glassfiber network realised throughout the city of Groningen. In this figure one can see the ‘backbone’ in black lines. The red lines are connections to a customer-site.





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On 5 co-locations equipment is housed. This forms the backbone for the Ethernet service. The Groningen Internet Exchange is the ‘external chain’. Here, one can connect with several service-suppliers and to locations outside the city of Groningen.

Some technical details:

- Glassfiber: G652
- Connectors: SC/PC
- Ethernetservice is offered by Imtech ICT

In growing the network, the step to connect small users like households is becoming more easy. Within two years it's expected that the first batch of households in Groningen are connected with glassfiber.

Community Network offers within the city of Groningen:

- dark fiber connections
- ethernet: virtual private connections
- ethernet: private network

If you chose an ethernet-service (100Mb or gigabit), Imtech ICT will install and service the equipment by order of CNG. Community Network has a wholesale-contract with Imtech ICT, so that's why very attractive prices can be offered.

If you chose fibers you must install and service equipment yourself at both ends of the connection. Normally only large organisations opt for dark fiber, because it requires a lot of their IT-department.

The Groninger Internet Exchange ([GN-IX](#)) is the marketplace in the network. Supply and demand come together on this spot. It offers advantages for demander and supplier.

- Service supplier needs no digging to every user, this makes prices and conditions via GN-IX better!
- Service-users have choice in service and suppliers: lower prices, shorter contact time and choice

Users can buy supplementary services via the Groningen Internet Exchange. Suppliers, for instance, can offer IP-transit, hosting, Voice-over-IP, storage, security- and ASP-services. One can also chain city-locations to 'locations-outer-city' via GN-IX.

To sell services via GN-IX a service-supplier must be present at GN-IX. Once you are present you can consider all connected CN-users as potential customers.

The GN-IX is a neutral marketplace. GN-IX is an independent foundation and no ties with whatever supplier. This is very important for 'fair trade' on the marketplace.

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Conclusions:

People who took the initiative for the Groningen Community Network are aiming at the improvement of the telecom services on the market. In 2002 it was stated that there was not much competition in this field in the region North Netherlands. There were no plans to spread the existing glassfiber networks and the prices for connections were ten times higher than in the industrial centre of the country (“Randstad”).

Since the privatisation took place the building of networks is not a public task anymore, but is up to the market. However, the market is not interested to change the situation with high prices and low investments. That is the reason why this initiative was born: mobilise the joined forces of the consumers. In regions where there are many demanders, there will be automatically more supply. The logical conclusion is that joining one's forces means to improve the market situation. In this case it means that the consumers have contributed to a much better supply of broadband facilities. The next step is now to make use of them in an adequate way and to create all kind of products and services.

The Community Network Groningen is unique because it is an open network. It is an

- Initiative of and for users
- Low-budget in high-bandwidth
- Freedom of choice in services and suppliers
- No network investments for service-suppliers
- Breeding ground for innovation



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The aim is to provide broadband access for really every household in the region. Basic facilities have been created by a number of big consumers. The step towards smaller consumers and private households is now much simpler. This will be a gradual transition going on for the next 2-3 years.

Confirmation of publishing allowness

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Page 5 of 5