



Computers in Homes Half-year Report

JANUARY 2016

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Computers in Homes is an initiative of the 2020 Communications Trust. The programme receives support from the Ministry of Education as well as numerous business and community partners.

Website: www.computersinhomes.org.nz

The 2020 Communications Trust is a registered charitable Trust, established in 1996.

Website: www.2020.org.nz

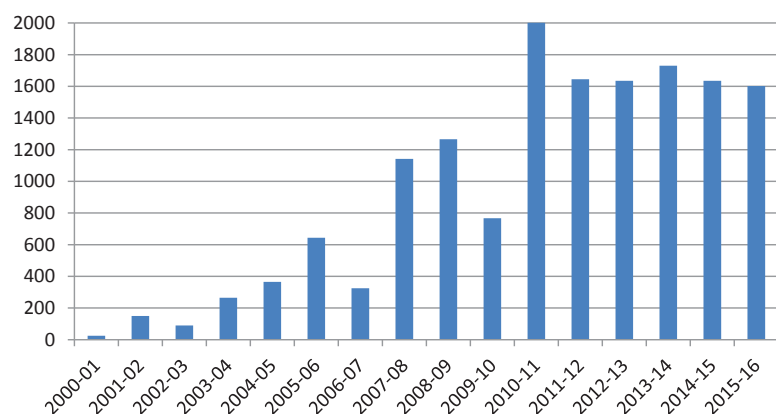
*Front cover: Unaiki Motu (5) off to a good start learning with a computer at her new school at Ahipara in the Far North. Her mother, Sharlah, was a **Computers in Homes** graduate in 2012.*

Equitable access still an issue

Our goal for *Computers in Homes* is to ensure that every New Zealand household with school-aged children has affordable access to the internet in their homes, as well as adults who have enough confidence using digital technologies to be able to support their children's learning. The 2013 Census reported that 15% households with school-aged children (62,000 households) did not have internet access. This is an improvement on the 100,000 disconnected households in 2006, but is it good enough when our children's futures are at stake?

If we continue to progress at the same pace, we could expect the number of disconnected households with school-aged children to drop to 40,000 by the time of the next Census in 2018. Is that good enough? The Ministry of Education has released a forward-looking future-focused learning strategy for schools – *Towards Digital Fluency*. Big investments are being made in creating modern learning environments, both in terms of digital infrastructure in schools as well as in new open learning spaces. Ubiquitous wireless connectivity in schools and unlimited internet bandwidth through the Network for Learning has created an exciting opportunity to rethink the education process and in the words of the Ministry's strategy to "transform teaching and learning".

CIH FAMILIES 2000 – 2016:



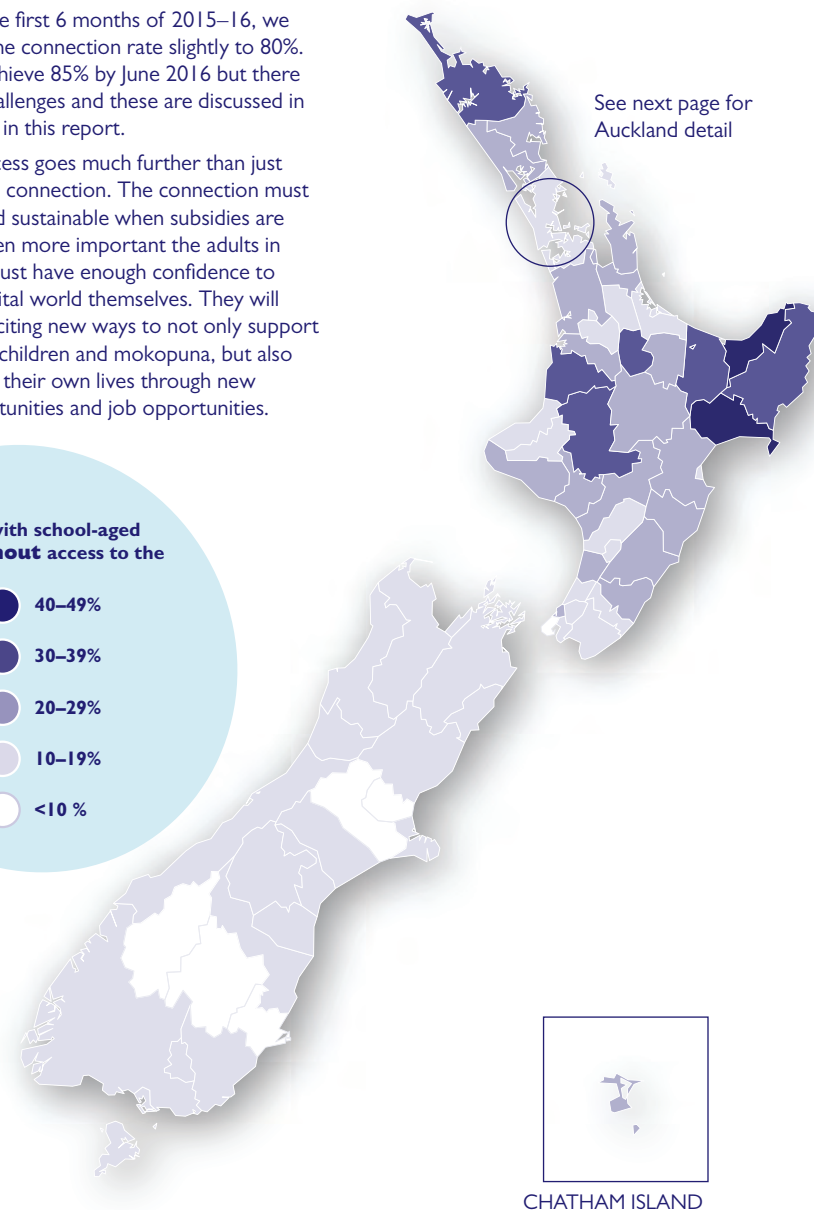
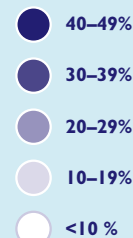
One of the four pillars of the Ministry's new strategy is 'equitable access' and while New Zealand has a long and proud record of ensuring equitable access to education for all (which is not the case in many other countries), the digital world brings new challenges in ensuring this is maintained. We are already starting to see some stresses on schools as they strive to achieve equitable access. The rapid shift towards individual digital learning devices, usually with parents having to foot the bill for the devices is one pressure. Another is the pressure on teachers to teach in environments where students often have access to technologies and information beyond many teachers' capabilities. And then there is the pressure of inequitable access beyond the school gates. 85% of students can go home and stay connected to the digital world; 15% can't.

A core focus for *Computers in Homes* is to ensure that students do have internet access in their homes (and most are now accepting that having access to the internet at home is in many ways more mission critical than having access to a computer). Computers take many forms from simple wristband health monitoring devices such as Fitbits to Smart TVs to an ever-expanding range of tablet and smartphone devices. All need an internet connection to work. So it is perhaps not surprising that we have lifted our sights in terms of internet connections for the families we support. In 2014–15, 79% of

all *Computers in Homes* families had an internet connection; in the first 6 months of 2015–16, we have increased the connection rate slightly to 80%. Our goal is to achieve 85% by June 2016 but there are significant challenges and these are discussed in more detail later in this report.

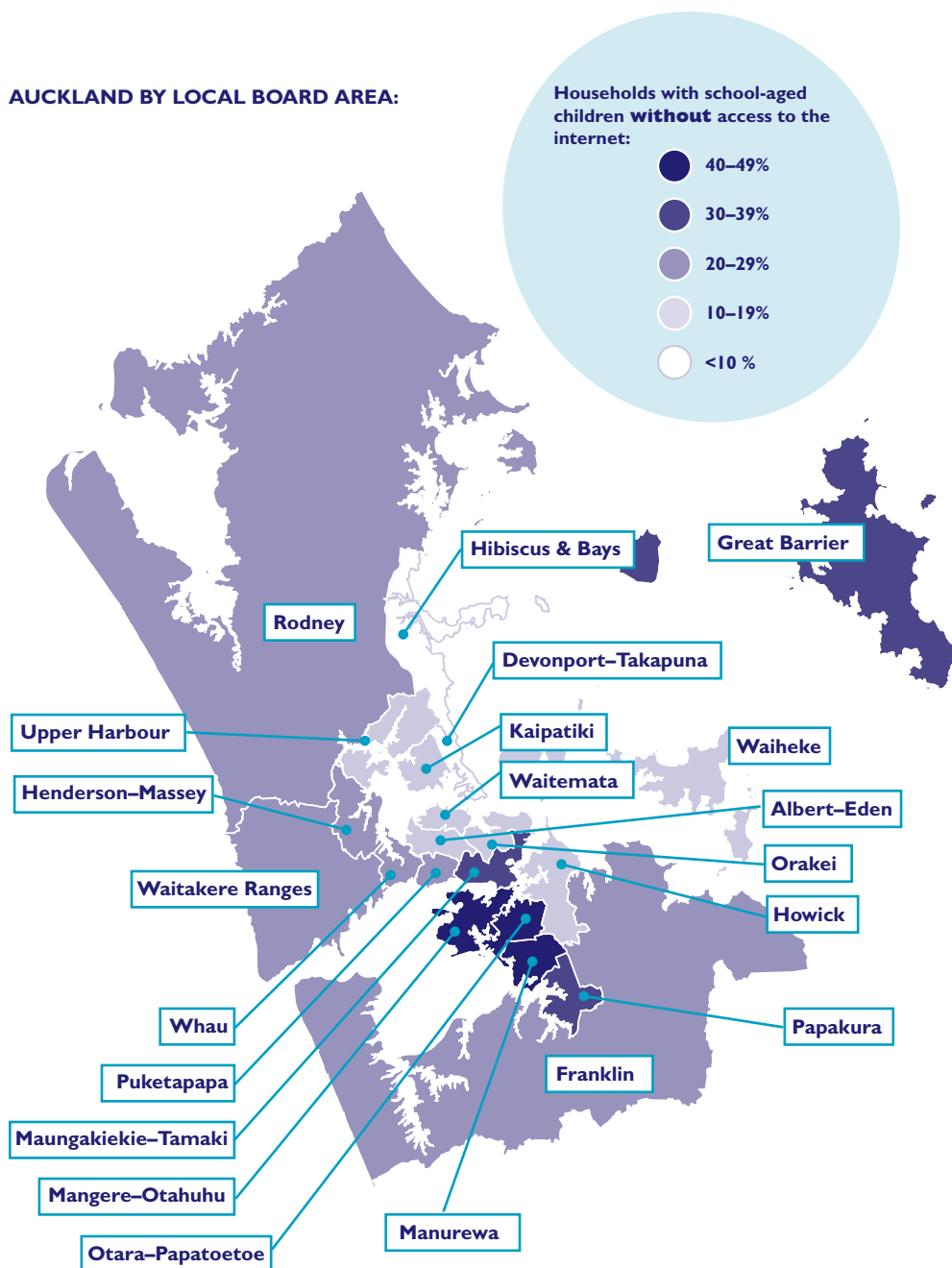
But equitable access goes much further than just the technological connection. The connection must be affordable and sustainable when subsidies are removed and even more important the adults in the household must have enough confidence to engage in the digital world themselves. They will then discover exciting new ways to not only support learning by their children and mokopuna, but also ways to enhance their own lives through new education opportunities and job opportunities.

Households with school-aged children without access to the internet:



Source: Statistics New Zealand 2014

AUCKLAND BY LOCAL BOARD AREA:



Source: Statistics New Zealand 2014

About this report

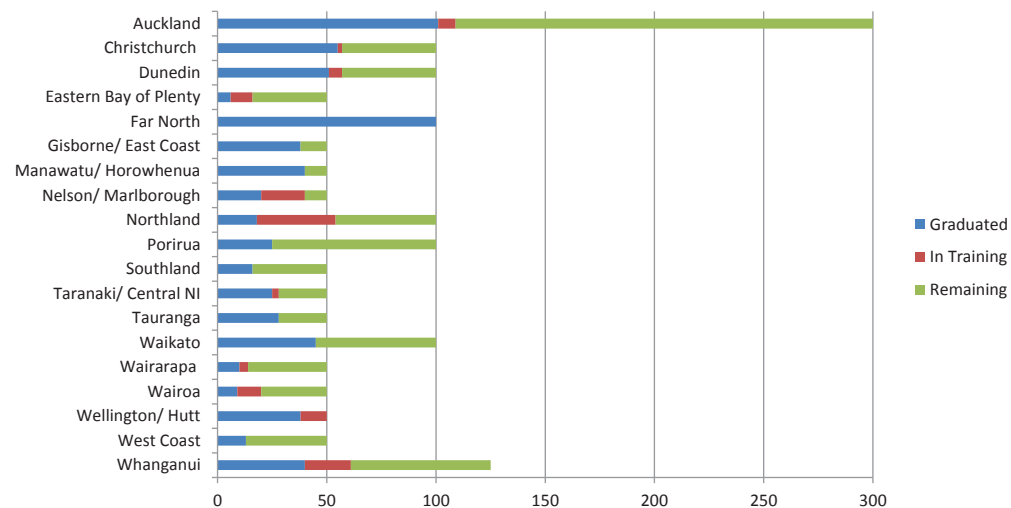
This mid-year report covers the period July to December 2015 and has a 'results' focus with regional success stories and results from participant surveys. We provide an update on progress with delivering *Computers in Homes* in each of the 19 regions funded by the Ministry of Education, as well as for the Ministry of Education funded refugee programme.

During the last six months, we have continued to develop and expand our related digital literacy programmes, including Stepping UP and KiwiSkills. We include reports on outcomes from these programmes as well to show a staircase of learning available for *Computers in Homes* graduate families and their communities.

PROGRESS 2015–16

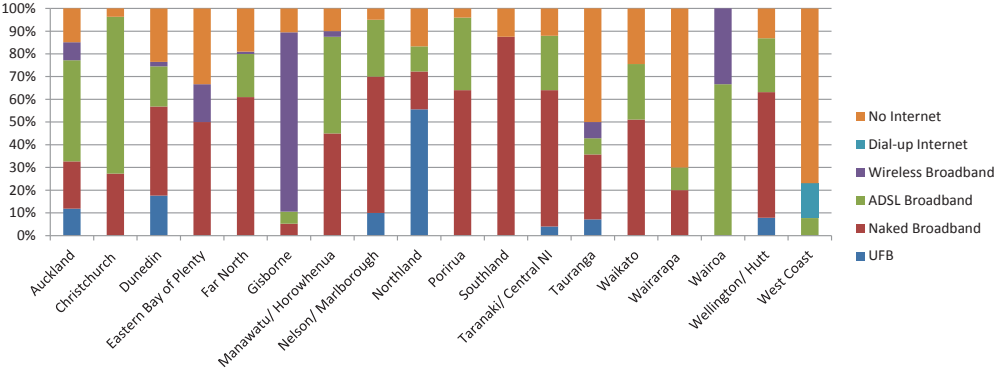
The Ministry of Education is providing support for a total of 1500 families during fiscal year 2015–16 (July 2015–June 2016); the 2020 Trust is also supporting up to a further 100 families using funding carried forward from previous years. As at 31 December 2015, the total number of graduates was 678 (45% of the MOE contracted number for 2015–16). This compares favourably with 552 for the same period in 2014–15.

Progress in each region with the number of graduates is summarised below:



During the last six months, we have been able to connect 80% of all graduating families to the internet. This is a substantial improvement on the rate achieved for the same period in 2014–15 (72%) and is a direct result of our increased effort to secure internet connections for participating families, despite ongoing challenges discussed later in this report.

UFB internet connections have been offered as the preferred option for the last 12 months, but during the last 6 months we were only able to connect 9% families to UFB (51 families compared to just 4, 12 months ago). This is almost entirely due to the lack of UFB infrastructure in the communities we support. Naked DSL continues to be the preferred method of internet connectivity because the copper wiring is mostly in place and it is relatively easy and quick to set up a new connection; just under half of all families (49%) chose this option. 33% had an existing telephone line and chose the Broadband ADSL option. 9% chose a wireless connection.



FOLLOW UP SURVEY

Twelve months after families graduate from *Computers in Homes*, participants are asked to complete an online survey reporting impacts of the programme on their lives. In addition, all participants are given the opportunity for a technician to conduct a warrant of fitness test on their computers and provide any upgrades necessary.

In the questionnaire, special attention is paid to any ongoing training that participants might have signed up for, any enhanced work or employment opportunities they have benefitted from and any indicators of improved learning outcomes for students.

The results included in this report cover the follow-up surveys completed during 2015 for each *Computers in Homes* region.

Our goal has been to achieve an 80% return with the 12-month surveys, but in 2015, as in previous years we are achieving around half this. The challenge we face is not in getting the surveys completed but in making contact with the families in order to get them to complete the surveys. We have used all forms of communication available to us – email, phone, text messaging and home visits. But the families we support are typically very mobile and change their phones frequently.

As a result we have decided to progress towards a new survey process that draws on a statistical sample rather than continuing our current ‘census’ approach. We hope to be able to implement this from the start of the next financial year (July 2016).

This could also help us expand our research activity to monitor outcomes after two years and possibly even longer. The challenge of contacting families will of course remain.

Region	Completed 2015 Follow-up surveys
Auckland	83
Christchurch	20
Dunedin	71
Eastern Bay of Plenty	44
Far North	12
Gisborne	18
Hawkes Bay	20
Manawatu/ Horowhenua/ Palmerston North	48
Nelson/ Marlborough	52
Northland	15
Porirua	10
Southland	28
Taranaki/ Central NI	18
Tauranga/ Rotorua	20
Waikato	9
Wairarapa	20
Wellington/ Lower Hutt	41
Whanganui	71
TOTAL	600

SURVEY RESULTS

We have selected a number of questions from the follow-up survey and presented these as a series of pie and bar charts. The results we have selected for this report focus on outcomes in terms of the impact on children’s learning and home internet use as well as further training and employment impacts for the programme participants themselves:

- How are children performing at school
- How is the computer being used to support learning at home?
- How is the internet being used at home?
- Have you enrolled on other courses?
- What qualifications are you seeking?

- Who has provided you with further training?
- What training courses have you undertaken?
- Have you had any change in employment?
- Have any other adults in your household had any change in employment?
- What have you found helpful in pursuing employment?

SUCCESS STORIES

We asked each of our *Computers in Homes* coordinators to provide one success story from their regions, highlighting the benefits of the programme and explaining how the programme is impacting the lives of not only participating families but also others involved in the programme.

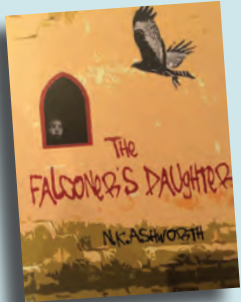
SUCCESS STORY – FIVE YEARS ON ... SAM ASHWORTH



An article in the *Gulf News* caught our eye during the year. Waiheke author Sam Ashworth published her first book, *The Falconer's Daughter*, in June 2015 at the Waiheke Library.

In 2010, Sam saw an article in the *Gulf News* about *Computers in Homes* and subsequently signed up. With her daughter soon to start high school, she realised that she would need a computer in her home, but when it arrived she also

realised that she could use it to write down the stories that she was always making up in her head. Five years later, *The Falconer's Daughter*, was published. According to her publisher, RSVP Publishing, Sam often mentioned that *Computers in Homes* was the catalyst for enabling her to write this book (and the next one!). Sam is still using her *Computers in Homes* computer daily to write other young adult and children’s books; her daughter has now left school and saved for a MacBook, but Sam says “it was our *Computers in Homes* computer that enabled her to practice the skills she needed as a young teen, so she didn’t get left behind in this technological world we now live in.”



Above: Sam Ashworth receives her *Computers in Homes* graduation certificate in November 2010 from tutor Richard Jude and Denise Roche, a Waiheke Local Board member at the time (now a Green Party MP).