



What Is It?

Town Crier is a Muskoka-Wide platform for communicating with residents and visitors alike. It uses free public wifi, broadcast messaging and anonymous data gathering to create a way for local organizations to easily reach out to residents and visitors. The initial Pilot Project will cover Gravenhurst and Bracebridge, with other communities added in later phases.

Free Public Wifi

The backbone of Town Crier is a free public wifi network that will be installed in high-traffic areas in Muskoka (initially the Bracebridge and Gravenhurst downtown cores). Businesses will be asked to house these wifi hotspots at no cost to them. Each hotspot is smaller than a desk phone and plugs into your existing modem with a single cable. The overlapping hotspots will form free wifi zones where users can move throughout the area while maintaining access. Free wifi is quickly becoming a key amenity in most progressive communities that want to be more appealing to visitors - especially visitors from other countries who do not have data coverage in Canada.

Signing in to the wifi network is easy, thanks to a one-time Facebook single sign-on. After that, users are automatically logged in to the network whenever they return.

Broadcast Messaging

In exchange for free wi-fi, users will be pushed an ad or notification no more than once per hour while online. Instead of random ads, these messages will be from local businesses and organizations, and will be targeted at specific customers based on demographics, time of day, and location. A message could be "come to our shop in the next hour for a free ice cream", or "show this ad at checkout for a discount", or "join us at Town Hall for an information session". Whatever the message, they come from local organizations, and are targeted specifically at residents and visitors who are currently in town.

Data Gathering

Thanks to the wi-fi technology, Town Crier can gather lots of useful data on where and when people are travelling in the network. Each business that hosts a hotspot can have access to the data for that hotspot (for \$100 per year). This can be useful in tracking which days and times have highest visitor traffic, whether certain promotions are effective, and will generally help each town make better decisions about how to attract more visitors to the downtown core.

FAQ

Why not just use Facebook?

Facebook, Twitter and email are great for staying in touch with friends you already have. If a visitor doesn't know you exist yet, these tools are virtually useless. Town Crier is a way to reach out to those strangers, share your message and get them to walk through the door.

If visitors don't pay, and local businesses don't pay, then who pays?

Town Crier is supported by providing advertising opportunities for businesses and organizations. Most "free" services are supported using this model. The difference with Town Crier is that the advertisers are community stakeholders rather than random businesses.

If I want to be a Wifi Location, what's involved?

The first locations in each town will be chosen to maximize the amount of the downtown we can cover. This means that we will need to be strategic about which businesses are chosen in order to ensure maximum reach.

Due to the Pilot Project constraints, we are restricted to the number of locations and advertisers. Once Pilot Project is complete, any business could become a wifi Location by first becoming an Advertiser.

The hot spot at each location will connect to the internet through that business' existing internet connection. Locations should work with their internet service provider to make sure their package includes **unlimited data**. All Canadian ISPs are required to offer this option. While there is no direct cost from Town Crier to become a Location, it is possible that your monthly internet bill may increase when moving to an unlimited data plan.

What do I get if I become an Advertiser? How much does it cost?

Advertisers in the Pilot Project will pay \$400 and receive:

- Design of 5 unique digital ad campaigns
- Minimum of 4 prime-time ad spots per month
- Ability to choose between full-screen HTML ads or Text Messages
- 15 months of service (June 2017 to September 2018)

The normal price for 15 months of service would be \$1600. Parry Sound Muskoka Community Network will provide development funds covering 75% of these costs for the first 50 Advertisers who sign up for the Pilot Program.

What are the rates after the Pilot is over?

Advertisers pay a base yearly subscription of \$1200, which includes:

- Design of 4 unique digital ad campaigns
- Minimum of 4 prime-time ad spots per month
- Ability to choose between full-screen HTML ads or Text Messages

What does all the ad jargon mean?

Ad Campaign - a professionally-designed advertisement for your product, service or organization.

Ad Spot - a date and time when your ad is pushed to users of the Town Crier wifi network.

HTML Ad - an ad with text, images and links that appears full-screen on a user's mobile device. Often designed to look like a poster or print ad, with links to your website (or anywhere you like).

Text Message - Ads can also appear as text messages on your phone, complete with links to any website.

What if I want more advertising?

For those who want to advertise more, or create additional unique campaigns, a-la-carte options will be available with volume discounts.

Who are the partners and what do they do?

Town Crier is a joint partnership between The Network, Clear Case Computers, Parry Sound-Muskoka Community Network and the Gravenhurst and Bracebridge Chambers. Each partner is entrusted with a specific job to ensure the project is easy and seamless for the businesses and organizations involved.

The creation of the professional advertisement campaigns will be created by The Network, a not-for-profit based business in Gravenhurst. The installation of the wifi hardware will be done by Clear Case Computers and Parry Sound-Muskoka Community Network has committed development funds to help this project succeed. The Chamber of Commerce will be overseeing the administration of project.

Revenue from the project will be used for sustainability of the project, and any overflow will be put towards community initiatives, such as the Founder's Circle and FAB Academy.

What about security?

Town Crier will use the Purple.ai Networking platform, which is specifically designed to adhere to Canada's encryption and digital privacy laws.

Service Maps - Where will Town Crier reach?

Gravenhurst - 24 locations (2 existing)

3 flex nodes available

Blue - Minimum coverage range

Red - Maximum coverage range

Actual range is reduced by the number and types of intervening walls



Bracebridge - 21 locations (0 existing)

4 nodes available (likely needed in West end)

Blue - Minimum coverage range

Red - Maximum coverage range

Actual range is reduced by the number and types of intervening walls



