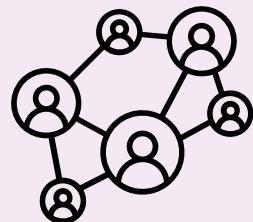
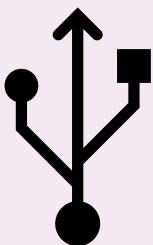




AGAINST
AUTOMATION: AN
EXPERIENCE REPORT

INTRODUCTION



Etowah County

Broadband Profile

August 2023



I worked for two years as an analyst for a broadband consulting firm. In this work, I attended over thirty in-person meetings in various counties across the state of Alabama; these meetings were intended to support local efforts to expand broadband access.

Community broadband profiles were later created, in part using notes taken by myself during these meetings.

Local perspectives

Partners note barriers and obstacles to broadband opportunity.



Elected Officials

Noted interest in turning Gadsden into a more technology-centered city.

Described challenges with broadband availability and its affect on education and public safety.



Governments and Anchor Institutions

Reiterated that the lack of broadband connectivity appears to be affecting both public safety efforts and K-12 education.



Internet Service Providers

Focused on the importance of public funding to get rural areas served.

Noted that affordability is a barrier to constructing broadband infrastructure in rural areas.



Residents

Noted challenges with broadband connectivity and availability. Due to the rurality of some locations in the County, residents reported poor internet speeds and lack of service.



Attendees shared their concerns about access and affordability in Etowah County

These are first-person accounts of barriers and obstacles encountered.

1

Participants noted that the Black Creek area, in their experience, does not receive advertised speeds from internet service providers. One participant stated, "I call it the Bermuda Triangle. We have nothing."

2

Participants noted the effect inadequate connectivity appears to be having on education, stating, "We have tons of students that don't have internet access." A participant also described that the school district provided Chromebooks, but many students seemed unable to use them, potentially due to lack of connectivity.

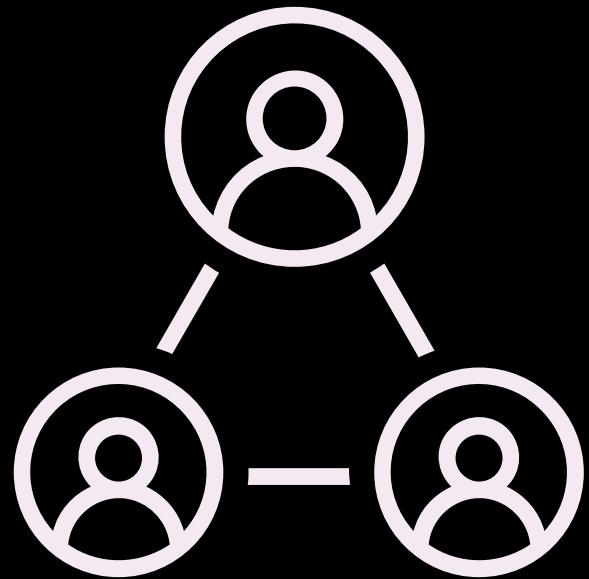
3

Participants noted that the lack of connectivity in rural areas also effects public safety. They reported challenges with cellular service and stated that reliable internet would support their capability to respond to emergency calls.





Image source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alabama#/media/File:Alabama_in_United_States.svg



Humans have the capacity and empathy to witness the struggles of other humans, and emerging technologies cannot replicate this gift.

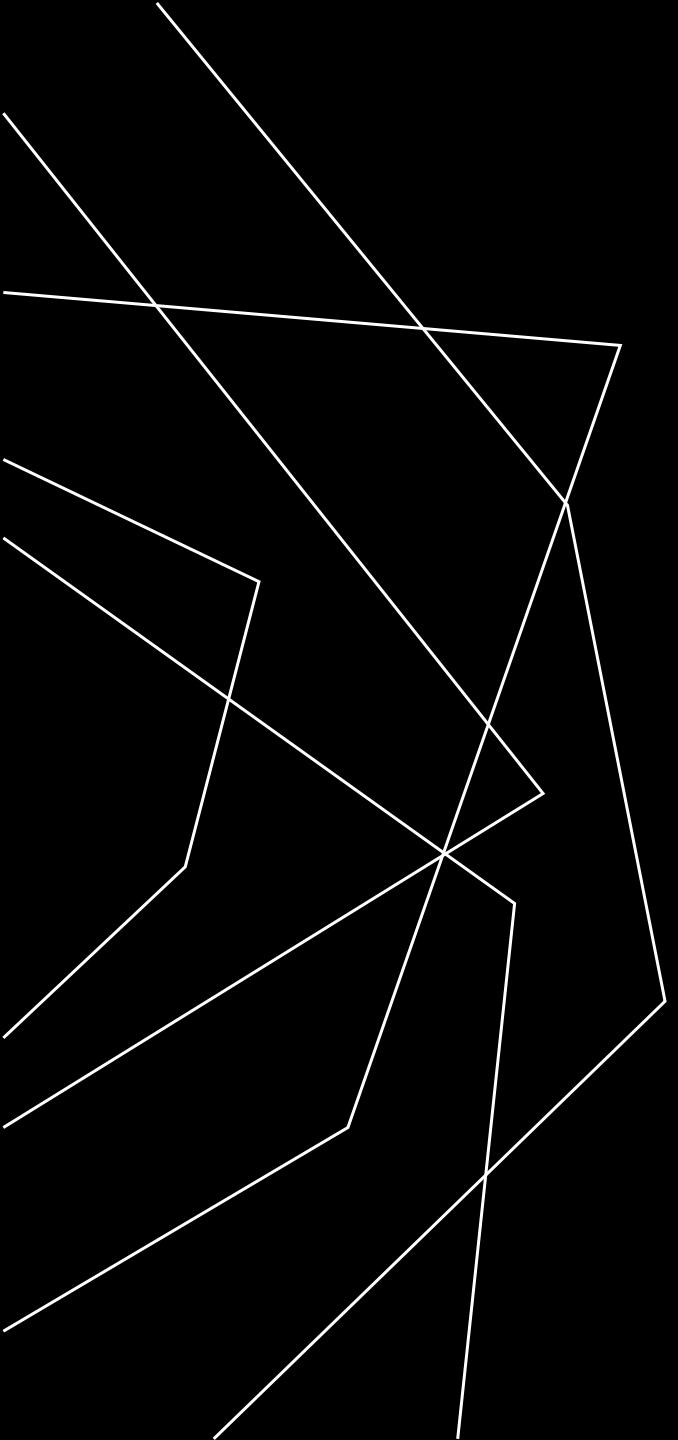
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THANK YOU

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