Islands get faster broadband than cities

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AN INTERNET network that offers remote communities a faster broadband connection than in most cities has been developed.

Using the internet at the Gaelic College on Skye as an original source, a wireless relay network has been created to serve the Small Isles of Eigg, Rum, Muck and Canna, as well as other remote parts of the mainland.

The technology was developed by communities with help from experts at the University of the Highlands and Islands and the University of Edinburgh, through a collaborative research project called Tegola. Local company HebNet helped extend the provision to other communities in the north-west Highlands.

The connection from the system is said to be faster than in most cities, reaching speeds of up to 20 megabits per second (Mbps).

Homes and businesses on the Small Isles and in the Highlands are said to be benefiting from superfast broadband provided through the project.

Many rural communities are too far from a telephone exchange for high-speed broadband to work and satellite broadband has been shown to be slow and expensive, research-ers said. However, they believe their method could provide a solution for these places and it is hoped the scheme will be rolled out across other communities.

Professor Peter Buneman, from the University of Edinburgh's School of Informatics, initiated the project.

He said: "I am delighted to see our scheme bringing the benefits of the web to these remote communities and hope that, with further support, our system can be implemented in more places like these."

The scheme is backed by the Scottish Government's Community Broadband Scotland initiative.

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