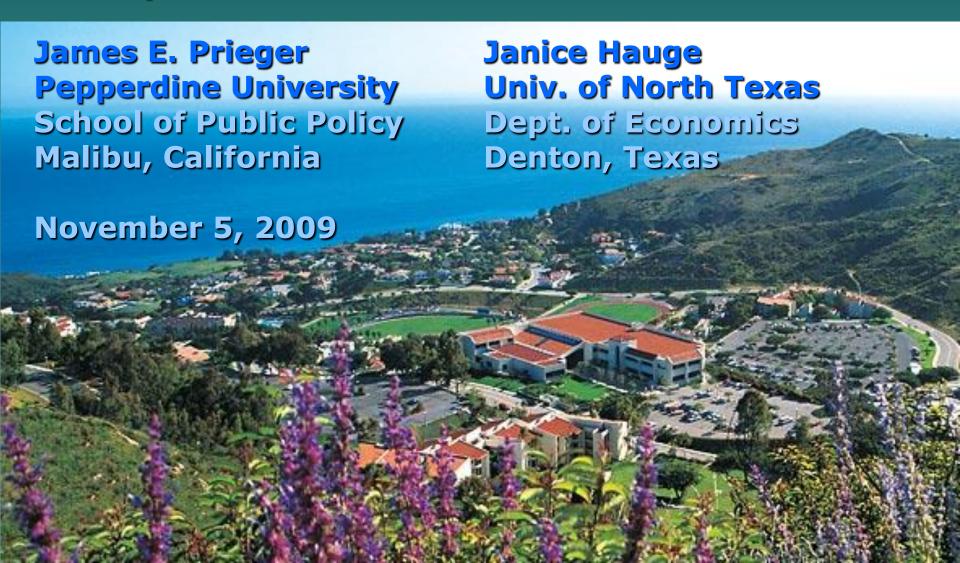
# Demand-Side Programs to Stimulate Adoption of Broadband: What Works?



### Introduction

- Purpose: examine the evidence on demand-side programs intended to stimulate broadband adoption
- Focus: the causal impact of a program on the adoption of broadband
- We ask: "what works"

# Types of programs

- Organize programs by the barrier they attack:
- Barrier #1: The price of BB service
- Barrier #2: Lack of computer ownership
- Barrier #3: Lack of digital literacy
- Barrier #4: Lack of perceived value of BB
- Tackling Multiple Barriers: Comprehensive Programs

## **Our Review of Evaluations**

#### General comments on what we found:

- Not much.
- Many (most) good programs have not been adequately evaluated.
- Lots of assumed causation between the program and outcomes
- Biggest pitfall: assuming causation (ad hoc fallacy) instead of proving it.

## **Our Review of Evaluations**

- Large national plans
- State level plans
- Local level plans
- Subsidy programs

## **Overall Findings**

- A successful program must tackle many goals.
- Encouraging broadband adoption is only part of a larger digital literacy effort
- Programs work when they
  - make non-users want to connect
  - make the Internet cheaper and easier to use,
  - adjust to users' preferences.

## **Overall Findings**

On the spectrum from national to local programs:

- Nationally funded programs with inadequate oversight can lead to waste, fraud, and abuse.
- Local programs have more complete knowledge of the barriers to adoption in the community.
- Local efforts can better ensure that programs are utilized by the intended recipients.
- Local efforts may have limited capability to collect and evaluate data.
- National efforts may have more capability to collect and evaluate data.

# Suggestions

- Cost-benefit analysis as a standard part of program review
- Rigorous program evaluation
- Collect appropriate data from which conclusions can be drawn
- Use appropriate statistical methods to determine the causal impact of a program