

The importance of improving the digital divide research paper examples

[Technology](#), [Internet](#)



Importance of Improving the Digital Divide between all Countries

The Gap between people, businesses and households who have direct access to digitized technology at home or at any given time and those who do not have, has brought about the digital divide in the global ring. There is no uniformity on how people utilise the Internet for its vast opportunities like acquiring knowledge, trading and social relations among other benefits. Diverse dissimilarities are replicated within and among nations. The capability of individuals, institutions and businesses in taking advantage of the Internet differ extensively across the globe.

Conversely, accessing the essential communication infrastructures is fundamental to any contemplation of matters touching the digital divide. There is need to locate how the digital divide is measured, where does it occur, what are the major causes among other underlying issues. Currently, there is great interest on governments and relevant authorities in determining the gap, while relying mostly on normal communication facilities, including computers, televisions, mobile phone and more so the Internet access. Primarily, the digital divide within domestic circles has been seen to originate from lack of education and low-income resources. Other major contributors on this ground have been blamed on gender, inequality and age. Good educational background and rational income has enormously contributed towards closing the gap, since individuals with better educational levels tend to access all sorts of ICT services (James, 2011).

Causes of the Digital Divide across the Globe

In the African continent, poverty has been the major issue dictating the digital divide. While many people may not be able even to put some food on the table on a daily basis, affording a computer could be a tall-order, let alone the connectivity rates that have still remained high due to bureaucracy and poor governance. Ali (2011) reports that there are regulatory measures that different governments and administrative authorities impose that hinder the momentum to shorten the gap between the digital divide across the Globe.

Since there are cosmic opportunities that citizens may pickup from the Internet, inaccessibility created by respective authorities may hinder their ambitions. Currently, Africa has the highest potential of every business that could be emerging anywhere in the world, yet the illiteracy rate has been the major issue affecting this continent. There exist a large number of people who do not know how to read and write hence, the digital technology has been a major challenge. The only isolated country in Africa that is doing better is South Africa, which by the year 2004 had Internet connectivity of about 5 million users compared to the rest of Africa combined, which had only 1.3 million users (Wheeler, 2004).

In recent times, even using mobile phones has actually been a hard nut to crack. For instance, currently mobile phones money-transfer is being carried out, but those who know how to transact with these gadgets fraudulently short-change the illiterates. In this regard, they may fear the modern technology hence, the digital gap continues. Since the digital technology

reached different regions selectively, when almost the rest of the West had known it, the methods of trainings that may allow competency in computer usage are quite not superior. Many also do not trust the transactions done online, unearthing that there is no mutual trust in the Internet, and this has really hindered the upcoming importers that could be forced to personally for instance, go to Japan and order goods; a deal that could be made easy and cost effective if done by online transaction procedures. Third-world countries more so Africa has not prioritized developments on digital issues hence, poor infrastructure and under funding. It is disheartening even as some of these countries have known the great importance of Internet connectivity; little has been done in bridging the gap of connectivity.

Major budget allocations go to the military and other issues, whereas ICT is not included within budget. Taxation issues have also hindered the growth of the ICT sector that in return; have produced high connectivity rates inflated beyond reach for the majority poor. Actually, this has significantly contributed to less Internet and mobile telephony connections and ownership. The gender factor has also been a powerhouse that has over the years contributed to the widening the gap. Even though, the US is termed as the mostly connected country in the world, the digital divide can be traced amid the urban and rural dwellers. In recent studies, it was determined that the American rural inhabitants are actually lagging behind in terms of connectivity and an urgent step was needed to quell the gap that had started expanding. It is also documented that African-Americans are trailing Whites mostly due to social, Gender and educational matters.

There is need for continuous assessment of situations in every enthusiastic nation so any shortfall can be rectified within the shortest time achievable. In some regions of the globe especially the developing countries, young girls and women are not regarded as worthy of education leave alone new technologies. In regards to this stereotyping, the female-sex is not adequately buoyant to essentially precede and exploit the technology that is so enthusiastically presented. They believe digital technology is not destined for them and so in turn do not have the poise (Fitch, 2007). Scholars have anticipated that the Arab-world will undergo severe tribulations if it does not urgently bridge the digital gap by manipulation of the emerging information technologies. Unlike Africa that mostly has little resources; Arab countries have immense income from oil that could be used to empower human resources. Besides oil, the region is gifted with innate tourist attraction sites, and for these reasons they mainly focus their economy on natural possessions.

In reality, these two resources are able to take charge as the motivating powers for the ICT sector as both need proper communication means, which entail tourist mobility, their lofty procurement power and the trans-national field of the oil business. Empowering this turf will guide in upholding the economic expansion determined by awareness not possessions, because it is proven that oil in this region cannot last for long and that could be disastrous in later days. Whereas this region is regarded as oil-rich, only six of the several countries are regarded wealthy raising more issues.

According to Wheeler (2004) few of the Arab nations have critically embarked on the revolution in the digital world citing that this is the most promising sector that would bring sustainability. Certainly, what have sustained the Internet users in most parts of the Arabic areas have been the Internet cafes. Among these countries include the UAE and Malaysia. Evidently, the geographical localities of the Arab-world have made it difficult to roll out proper infrastructure for communications. The major factors that act as hindrances are vast deserts, low density of Arab inhabitants in rural locations and forests. Since there are varieties of modern connectivity that could be used to overcome these issues there is need to show the willpower. An incarnation of Wi-Fi knowledge and satellite transmitters could present connectivity avoiding landline wiring.

Vidyasagar (2006) affirms that among other issues that have made diverse societies especially the Arab-world to be sceptical in fully embracing the information technology has been the argument of the language factor. Undeniably, Arabs like many other indigenous groups are not gifted with English proficiency, and the dominant language in the Internet has been English. Actually, this has contribute to their shying away of the relevant Internet contents. Diverse ideological differences and negative attitude towards the West must have also been a major contributory factor slowing down the ICT growth in these potential regions. Gender issues have also been dominant in most of the Arab-world, since women are not being empowered as expected it this modern century. Female-sex has been

treated like inferior being yet they form the backbone of the modern humanity (Vidyasagar, 2006).

The Underlying Forces of the Digital World

According to Vidyasagar (2006), access to digital connectivity has over the years proven to be extremely valuable in the strengthening of human potential, than any other communication varieties. For instance, in India rural farmers from unreachable villages are able to sell their produce without heading to the markets. Students have also reached educational libraries without wasting more resources in search of knowledge. Social media has revolutionized the world proving that, in it lies a great formidable force that cannot be stopped if it is fully embraced. Getting fully informed are some of the basic fundamentals that the digital web has brought. Democracy can learned and achieved through digital connection where people might come together and defend their democratic rights. A case in point, when former President of Egypt, Mubarak shut off the Internet for at least five days to thwart the flow of social media messages, but the attempt brought down Egypt to its knees (Ali, 2011).

People across the divide have greatly benefited from the social media in terms educational, health, democratic participations and other benefits. The ease of transacting business is at the finger tip. In developed countries, the Internet has been the main tool for voting and this has eased the collection of results within the shortest time possible. It is on record that the currently aspiring candidates in the political fields make use of the digital connectivity to persuade more followers that could have otherwise not been reached if

the digital connection was not established. Opinion polls can be collected at a speedy pace without analysts performing door to door collection of data. Medics have helped seriously ill patients by seeking real time information regarding other forms of strange illnesses, and this has transformed the health sector. Indeed, if the gap across the digital divide can be bridged, many nationalities would all benefit collectively.

Recommendations

Kaiser (2005) argues that educational policies concerning the digital usage are not encouraged in countries that are lagging behind the digital technology. Middle-aged citizens in the developing countries are vital in improving the awareness of the digitized world, but most of them are not empowered. Some also think that the digital technology is only for the young yet, within few years those who were thought to be young also move on without proper knowledge. This issue keeps on rotating and hence, the gap keeps on widening. As a matter of fact, the developed countries since the invention of the Internet have enormously gained from e-commerce, that include online shopping, goods ordering, electro-financial transactions and other uncountable benefits. Economic equality must be observed since there is only a section of the world's strong states that are really reaping while the rest are either short-changed or their economic status cannot sustain them in the e-commerce arena (Shanyang and Elesh, 2006).

Gender issues in regards to technology must be addressed with urgency to bring everyone on board. Economic gains got from the digital world must be balanced and some funds channelled to the less fortunate. Like the imitative

of, “ one laptop per child” has significantly improved the lives of the minorities. There should be a universal procedure of pricing where countries that lack the digital infrastructure be uplifted to the levels of the already developed world to be able to provide the already strained citizen with the much needed knowledge and empowerment and this can only be done through the help of the UN intervention programs. The social impact of ICT will diverge from every country, but the age factor, levels of education and compositions of populations are expected to be innermost determinants (Ayanso, Cho and Lertwachara, 2010).

Conclusion

Financial institutions and other relevant bodies in the under developed countries should sponsor early education as a tool to bridge the gap existing in the digital divide. There should also be great campaigns involving the elderly so the right attitude could be planted within them to embrace the world’s fastest growing mode of communication. ICT experts must also work extra mile to accommodate the less-fortunate, people with disabilities, the female-sex so that they may also benefit from the modern technologies of the world more so the Internet.

When deregulations are done, high educational levels achieved, trailing societies in the digital world will improve their skill-bases, e-commerce will be enhanced and better welfare services will be realized courtesy of the electronic activities. As a matter of urgency, strict regulations in some parts of the world should be addressed since; the digital world has greater benefits to both the government and the surrounding communities. Illiteracy levels

must be suppressed and the poor empowered to be able to afford normal amenities before they can indulge for the long journey of bridging the digital divide. Full realization of the human potential, would only be seen when every living person is brought on board and the digital gap will indeed, narrow down if not fully eradicated. In a nutshell, The UN as a universal body should intensify all of its campaigns to achieve most of its mandates more so, overseeing the digital divide gap narrowed to manageable levels.

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Appendixes

Source: <http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm>